



**A HISTORY OF
RIVERSIDE
GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
1934~1984**

RGHS
4/2/03 \$10

RIVERSIDE GIRLS

A HISTORY OF RIVERSIDE GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL 1934-1984

Researched and written by

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Anne McLeod
Lynn Scott
Colin Slow
Judith Shapira



Preface

This history has been researched and written by a committee, each member of it responsible for a period of the school's history, and with one member as editor of the whole. The reader may detect the odd difference in style and perspective as a result. But we hope we have not tried to produce a horse and ended with a camel.

We have been very grateful for and hearted by the number of ex-students, particularly from the school's early days, who wrote down their memories for us, who spent time talking to us, who came to the school to be interviewed, and who brought us photos, press clippings, uniforms, badges and other memorabilia.

Even more overwhelming was the tremendous esteem and affection these people hold for the school. We only hope we, as teachers, engender such glowing life-long memories in our students.

Past teachers, too, contributed their memories from their point of view. Notable was Miss Joyce Allen, a teacher who began her career the day the school opened and taught there for its first five years.

Our history is not an academic piece, although we have tried to be accurate and checked information where possible. But it deals often with personalities and memories and should be described as mainly anecdotal. If, after reading this, any former student

or teacher can correct a statement or supply further information or memorabilia, the school would be delighted to receive it and add it to its archives.

Consistently evident through the history of Riverside has been:

- an appreciation for the magnificent site with all Heads of the school ardent tree planters or developers - or both.
- Heads with distinctly individual styles.
- an exceptional group of dedicated, hard-working teachers genuinely concerned for the welfare of the girls, their happiness and successful futures.
- a wealth of lasting affection and respect for their teachers and school from the students.

This has made us happy to be in turn a part of Riverside's history. May these distinctive features always continue at Riverside.

MARY EMERY

for co-authors

Effy Hendy

Patricia Lowing

Anne McLeod

Lynn Scott

Colin Slow

Judith Shapira

RIVERSIDERS ALL

How it all started

On 20 November 1929, a deputation from the Drummoyne Public School Parents and Citizens Association presented to D.H. Drummond, the Minister for Education, a case for "urgent and immediate improvements" to the school. It was at the time a Super Primary School which had three secondary years as well as the infants and primary ones.

After considering the facts presented, the Minister decided that "the most urgent thing necessary" was to find some means of accommodating the 350 girls of the secondary (domestic science) years. Their needs were more urgent than the boys. The provision of additional accommodation on the site as a solution was rejected because of the restricted playground area. So the transfer of the girls to a school on a new site was decided on instead.

At least five sites were considered, but rejected. Miss M. Kidd, Staff Inspector for Domestic Science Schools, argued for a site in Gladesville so that a central domestic science school could be established to serve not only the districts of Drummoyne but also Rozelle, Balmain, Gladesville, Ryde and Eastwood.

At that time all secondary schools were selective. Girls either went to an academic school or to a domestic science school. Only the very few would go to a university and into a profession. The vast majority were to become wives and mothers - though they might be nurses or office workers briefly, before marriage. Some could become infants, primary and domestic science school teachers after training (non-graduates), though then they would only be employed as teachers while unmarried.

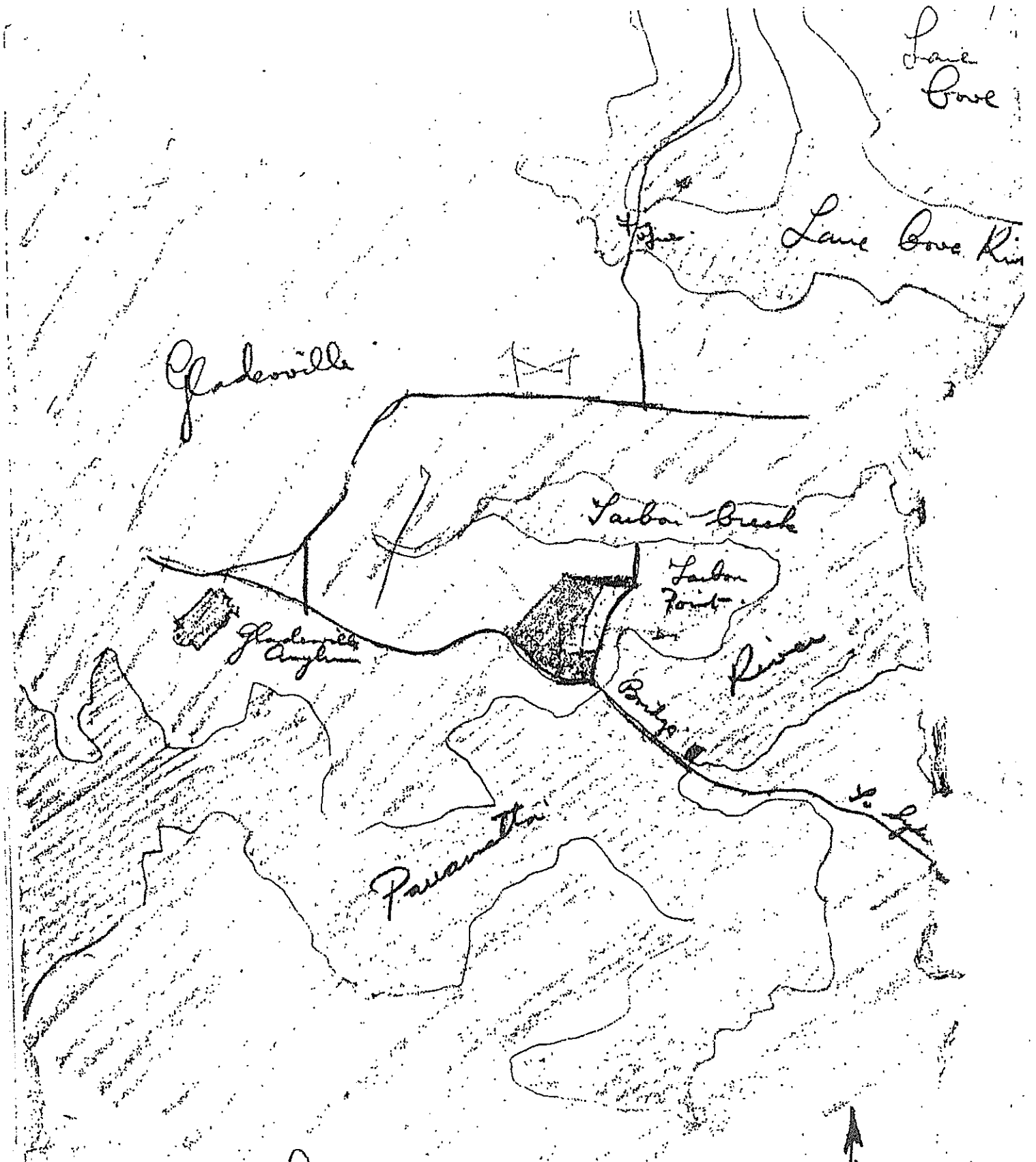
The few at the academic high schools were still regarded with some suspicion to judge by a demur expressed at the proposed building of this girls school. In 1931 when detailing the reasons for selecting the site for Riverside an officer of the Department of Education had to assure the Minister that the site had not been acquired for a "High School but a Central Domestic Science School for girls".

The site is chosen

In January 1930, the Minister for Justice drew attention to a large area of Crown land beyond the Gladesville Bridge. It was a part of the Gladesville Asylum (Mental Hospital) grounds used by the hospital as a run for dry cows, as well as having a rubbish dump and some of Hunters Hill Golf Club greens on it. There was already under consideration a proposal to subdivide and sell the Crown land for residential lots.

It was thought "eminently suited for the purpose of a Central Domestic Science School" since it "commanded extensive views of the river and surrounding country, and was an ideal site away from congested and noisy areas, and yet centrally situated and could be conveniently reached by tram ..."

This view was supported by Mr A. Max Allen, a Senior Surveyor, sent to report on it. He thought it a "magnificent site" and that a "building worthy of it was likely to be erected" since a school for some eight hundred girls from about thirteen years of age upwards was proposed. Then, and until the new Gladesville Bridge was built, the site not only overlooked the



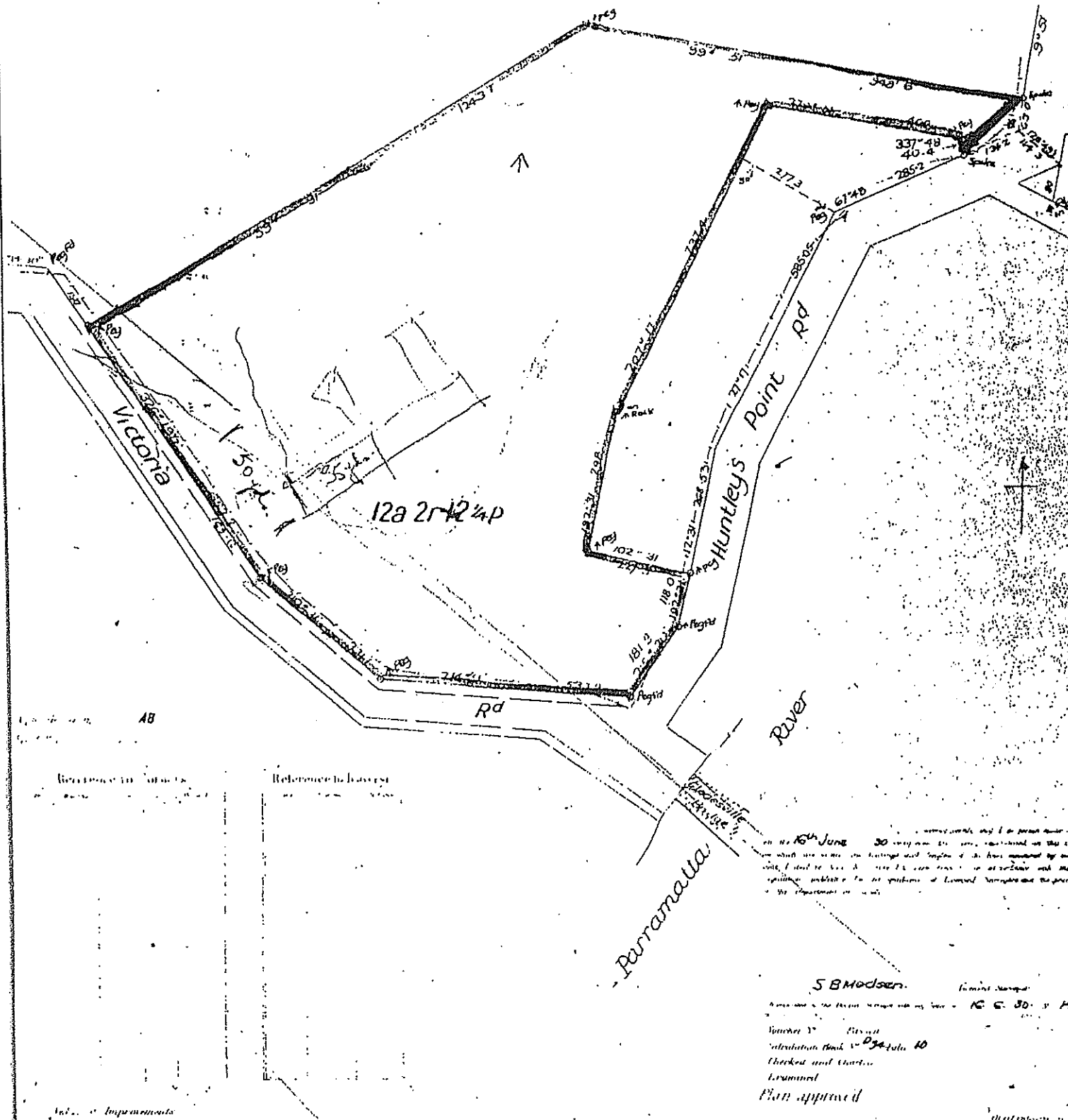
Locality Plan.

Gladesville Central Domestic
Science School.



PLAN OF PORTION \uparrow
County of Cumberland Parish of Hunter's Hill
 LAND DISTRICT OF METROPOLITAN LAND BOARD DISTRICT OF SYDNEY
 Occupation License N^o Holding Eastern Division
 being acquired for Public School purposes at Gladesville

of Gladesville Asylum Reserve Dedicated as Hospital for the Insane Vic^o Gaz 14th Dec 1895



Parramatta River but also Tarban Creek.

Despite this agreement on the site's suitability, the Health Department, and particularly the Hospital authorities, were reluctant to give it up. But on 8 August 1930, the area of 12 acres 2 rods 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ perches was appropriated and resumed under the Public Works Act 1912, and vested in the Minister of Public Instruction for the purposes of the Public Instruction Act of 1880. That is, it was to be used to build a school.

That school was not opened until 1934. The reason: the Depression. There was no money for building. In the intervening years, a further attempt was made by the Health Ministry to regain the land for the hospital. A suggestion was made that the school site be on the present Gladesville park. This was rejected as being too small an area, not as elevated and running into rock shelves to the water's edge. Further, it was already being used as a park and seemed likely to always to continue to be used for recreation purposes.

"An equally accurate prediction concerned some two acres of land with frontages to Huntleys Point Road which had been excluded from the school site. They were intended to be subdivided into residential allotments. And having mental hospital buildings so close to residences was thought could be objectionable and cause a loss in value of these acres "which in time should realise a fair sum".

The Minister of Education held firm. A report on the history of the site acquisition had a typed submission dated 14 September 1931:

While it will be impracticable to build immediately on this site, it is most essential that it should be retained for further use. It is a magnificent level site on high ground overlooking Parramatta River and Tarban Creek. No department could put it to better use than the Department of Education. I recommend that the site be retained.

Under this formal submission two

hand-written terse comments from the Minister say it all:

Will visit the site

and then:

I visited this site today and cannot agree to give it up. 16/9/31

Building starts

In 1932 action was taken to start building the school. Sketch plans had already been drawn up in 1930. The estimated cost for the work was £35,258 which was to include an amount of £1,500 for ground improvements and fences.

The plan provided for a caretaker's quarters at the suggestion of Miss Inspector Kidd because of the size of the school and the extensive grounds. At that stage, this was rejected since it was stated in a memo of 30 March 1931:

This proposal is quite contrary to Departmental policy at present as caretakers are not appointed to any of the secondary schools, and no such appointments are contemplated.

The Department obviously changed its mind later since a caretaker's house was built and occupied in 1935.

The same memo commented on the inclusion of a gymnasium. It was thought this might have to be omitted because of lack of funds. But it, too, was built. It was pointed out that the plan provided for four sets of stairways to the ground floor and that this was contrary to rules for school planning. These laid down a separate stair-case for every 200 children "or part thereof". Since the plans were for 750 pupils, it was stated it could be assumed that less than 400 would be on the ground floor so two stairways would be sufficient. The plan was amended accordingly and today there are in the main building only two staircases at either end of a long corridor.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

GLADESVILLE CENTRAL DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOL:

New Building.

.....

Miss Steff Inspector Kidd,

Will you please furnish a recommendation in connection with this matter. A list of the items specified to be supplied is given hereunder. The total amount set down against each item is shown to give some indication of the size of the stove etc. which is proposed.

Fuel	1 Cooking range and register	£25. 0. 0
	7 Large stoves at	£105. 0. 0
	1 Small gas stove	£15. 0. 0
	1 Gas stove	£7.10. 0
	1 Gas clothes boiler	£6. 0. 0
	2 Auto water heaters	£45. 0. 0
	1 Bath heater and shower	£8. 0. 0
	7 Observation meters	£14. 0. 0
	3 Gas rings	10. 6

18 OCT 1933

30

B.C. HARKNESS,
Chief Inspector,
per *E.H.*

17.10.33

C. I.

Recommendations—

EX. D.S.
26 OCT 1933

Gas Appliances - see letter attached.

Fuel Cooking Range - "Bega" required

Electric Appliances -

2 Water heaters - 100 gal. cap
1 bath heater (home use)

1 NOV 1933

E. E.

3 NOV 1933

Recommend that the Light, Heat and Power Committee be asked to arrange for the installation of the gas stoves and other gas appliances and that the Department arrange for the fuel stove. Action has been taken on other papers re electrical app stoves and appliances.

M. D. X
16/10/33

7/11 15 12 33

30/10/33

Redaction app
11/11

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

DISTRICT.

SECTION.

No. _____

DEPARTMENT OF
67182-1 SEP 1930
EDUCATION

Memorandum from M. D. Kidd Inspector to

Gladesville Central Domestic Science School.

Required Accommodation.

As it is proposed to house Domestic Science Girls at present at Drummoyne, Gladesville, Rozelle and Balmain at this Central School, accommodation for 750 pupils is required.

Accommodation

18. Class rooms.

Mistress' room.

Staff rooms on each floor.

Laboratory Acc. on each floor.

Store rooms.

Cent. Room. (larger than ordinary class room)

Typing "

Library

Domestic Science Section.

2 Kitchens with movable partition between
pantry

laundry

store for fuel etc.

Staff-rooms.

Change room.

Hall - dining R. sitting and bedrooms,
kitchen, pantry.

2. Demonstration Science Rooms
with preparation room between

3 Living rooms with sitting room
between two of them

Lunch Shop.

Assembly Room.

(fitted for Physical Culture).

M. D. Kidd

1/1/30

[OVER]

Place _____

Date _____

Miss Kidd had also drawn up a list of required accommodation (1 September 1930). This included eighteen classrooms, specialist rooms, and a "tuck-shop" and "Assembly Room" fitted for "Physical Culture" (see p.5).

Further adjustments to the proposed cost of the school were made. On 13 September 1932, a request was made that the estimated cost be reduced to £25,850 which would equate with the cost of Canterbury Domestic Science School's building. But on 29 May 1933, just prior to the laying of the foundation stone the cost was estimated at £30,697.

It was not until 9 March 1933 that the Government Architect reported that plans and specifications had been completed.

The building of the school was carried out by the Government's Building Construction Branch as a charge against the Urban Construction Authority No.159. This was, in fact, unemployment relief work.

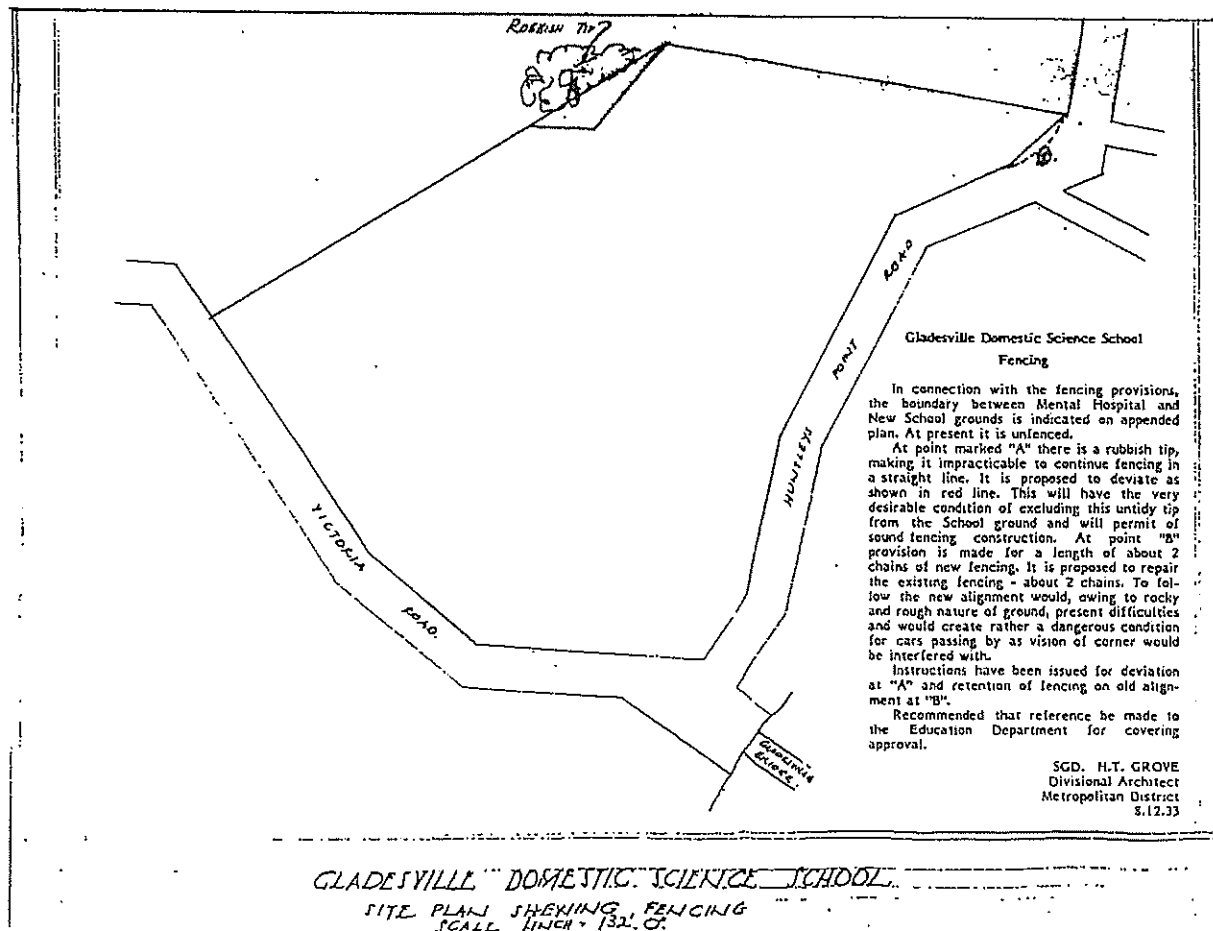
The new buildings were to comprise a main classroom block, two storeys

high, and a single storey gymnasium and lavatory block. A U-shaped plan was adopted for the main block, thus providing a large central quadrangle which was to be concreted for assembly purposes.

There were to be eighteen classrooms, a domestic science section of two large kitchens, laundry, pantry, changing room, a typewriting room, art room, three sewing rooms and a fitting room, two science demonstration rooms, staff rooms, visitors' rooms and Headmistress's room.

The gymnasium block was to have, apart from the gym cum hall, a dressing room and "Instructor's room", tuck shop, lavatory, and two large shelter "pavilions". The tuck shop and pavilions faced the present hockey field, and had benches as seating with rows of hooks for hats to be hung on. The front of the school would face the river with a path leading down to the road.

With buildings under way, planning for the real opening of the school began.



The name is Riverside

But before then, another disagreement had occurred. This time it was over the name of the school. On 21 September 1932, an official paper points out that since the case for a new school originated at Drummoyne, it had continued to be referred to as such. But it was obviously necessary to decide on a name for the proposed school. Miss Kidd suggested Gladesville and it was recommended it be known as Gladesville Domestic Science School.

However, in a letter written by the President of the Huntleys Point Progress Association of 17 May 1933 on behalf of that association, the name of Gladesville was objected to on the grounds that it associated the locality with the Gladesville Mental Hospital, then known as the Lunatic Asylum (see p.9).

At the laying of the foundation stone on 3 June 1933, a deputation raised the question of a name with the Minister and requested he await the decision of a district conference before confirming any name. The Departmental view was that Gladesville should remain as it connected with the local district, the post office, and was suitable for a central school. At the public meeting on 19 July to form a P & C Association for the new school, it was decided to leave any consideration of the name to a future date (see opposite).

The objectors must have remained persistent because although official correspondence still designated the school as Gladesville Central into 1934, it was referred to as Riverside on opening, and on 5 March the P & C Association stated their approval of the name Riverside and thanked the Minister, Mr Drummond, for his suggestion of the name. On the twentieth of that month, the school was officially designated Riverside Central Domestic Science School.

Although Mr Drummond is given credit for the name by the P & C, almost certainly the first Headmistress, Miss Nielsen, suggested it originally. Miss Nielsen reportedly

Weekly Times

DAY, AUGUST 3, 1933

DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOL

PARENTS' AND CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION FORMED

A preliminary public meeting held at Gladesville on June 15 appointed a representative committee to convene a public meeting upon notice to all Municipal Councils, P. & C. Associations, Progress Associations and schools within the municipalities of Drummoyne, Hunter's Hill and Ryde, and to the wider area to be served by the new school by advertisement in the "S.M. Herald."

In accordance with the above a large public meeting, at which all districts were well represented, was held at the Gladesville Public School on Wednesday evening, July 19. Those present included Aldermen Parthing and Arnold (Hunter's Hill) and Aldermen Chatfield (mayor), Mahon, Rowlings, Marlow, Cheetham, Chamberlain and Harrison (Ryde).

The committee recommended that to facilitate business its chairman (Mr. J. H. Catts) should preside to submit its recommendations. It was proposed, however, that the Mayor of Ryde, Ald. R. G. Chatfield, should occupy the chair, and upon a show of hands being taken the meeting elected the Mayor.

NAME OF THE SCHOOL

The first recommendation of the committee was moved by Mr. J. H. Catts, as follows:—

"That a Parents' & Citizens' Association be formed in connection with the new Domestic Science School at Huntley's Point."

The mover stated this was merely a formal resolution, which he suggested might be adopted, leaving the question of the name to be decided without prejudice when the committee submitted as the next item of business the adoption of rules, the first of which dealt with the name of the school.

Ald. Chamberlain (Ryde), however, moved that the words "Huntley's Point" in the formal resolution be deleted, and the word "Gladesville" inserted in lieu thereof and urged that this early opportunity should be availed of to test the opinion of the meeting.

After discussion, Mr. Logan, headmaster Gladesville, acting as teller, a vote by show of hands resulted in the amendment being defeated and the adoption of the original motion.

Excerpt from The Weekly Times
3 August 1933

DEPARTMENT OF
39639 * 18 MAY 1933

EDUCATION

Letter against name

ASSOCIATED BUSINESS
SERVICES LTD.
Waverley House
Central Square, Sydney
Tel. MA 1618

WAVERLEY PRESS
12 O'Connor St., Sydney
Tel. M 4711

PROCESS ENGRAVERS
LTD.
Process Engravers, Etc.
Mansions House, Sydney
Tel. MA 4773

ASSOCIATED BUSINESS SERVICES LTD., PROPRIETORS

WAVERLEY PRESS

Artists, Process Engravers, Linotypers,
Stereotypers, Commercial and Color
Printers, Bookbinders, Publishers and
Manufacturers of Paper Products.

17th May, 1933.

The Director of Education,
Bridge Street,
SYDNEY.

Dear Sir,

New Domestic Science School.

On behalf of the Huntleys Point Progress Association and the concurrence of the Henley Progress Association and the Gladesville branch of the Federal Labor Party may we invite your consideration of the suggestion that the new Domestic Science School now in course of erection at Huntleys Point should not be named Gladesville.

The Lunatic Asylum in this locality is well known throughout Australia as the Gladesville Asylum and it would appear very undesirable indeed for the new school to be similarly named. The name at once suggests the locality, the proximity and association of the large number of unfortunate inmates of the Asylum.

Our Huntleys Point Progress Association considers, and it is indisputable that the dominance of the district by the well known name of the Asylum is destructive of local values. Every person being directed to these parts is advised to take a Ryde or Gladesville tram and it is very common for the remark to be passed "Oh you live near the Asylum."

Action is now in progress to have the name of the district of Gladesville altered, as Lidcombe took the place of Rookwood. This move will no doubt succeed, but some little time is involved.

We are not particular as to the name given to the school. Hunters Hill or Huntleys Point would be suitable or any other.

We strongly urge that the new school should not be called Gladesville.

Yours faithfully,

W. B. Att
President Huntleys Point
Progress Association.

*asked
B.D.
22/5/33
H. K. S.*

lived in Riverside Ave, Ryde (near Ryde Bridge) and this presumably gave her the idea and way of solving the dispute.

The school begins to take shape

Then, as now, the new school was going to have to raise its own funds for virtually all equipment, and most things besides. One of the earliest official approvals granted to the school was that concerning the Tuckshop profits which were to be used for the purchase of special equipment.

The formation of a Parents & Citizens Association on 19 July has been mentioned. Probably the Association's first request on behalf of the school was made soon afterwards since on 23 October they were advised by the Department in reply to a request that there were no funds available for a telephone extension. Nor was the Department prepared to wire the building in anticipation of future service.

The sense of *deja vu* becomes even stronger. In December it was reported that although the school would operate from the beginning of the next school year the buildings would not be finished before March. Thus the Domestic Science sections of Gladesville and Rozelle would transfer to open the school but ironically, those from Drummoyne would remain until the building was completed.

The first Headmistress, Miss Camellia Olivia Nielsen, was appointed. She was the Mistress at Drummoyne, having begun there in July 1921. For the first month or so of 1934, not only did she start a new school but also had to continue to run the remaining Drummoyne Domestic School section too. She, as did her two successors, began her career as a Pupil Teacher and was admitted to a teachers training school after gaining a scholarship by examination. She had just turned 60 when she began at Riverside.

The school opens

With not all the students there, and the buildings incomplete, the school's

first day was somewhat disorganised. Quite apart from the building going on around, including the surfacing of the quadrangle, not all the desks had arrived, and the paint was still wet, so the girls had to be sent home after the roll was called.

One of the students of those first days writes:

... many of the classrooms had not been completed. There were painters, carpenters, men trying to cement the quadrangle, and for weeks we seemed to wander aimlessly from one classroom to another, herded about like so many sheep. Lessons were very haphazard, at some stage we were given a test from which we were graded into classes. I found myself in 1E and for weeks we had no class teacher. Eventually the Deputy Head (Miss Lamond) became our mistress but because of her "other duties" we were more often than not put on "our honour" to do a composition or some set assignment without supervision

The quadrangle she mentions still being surfaced was an expanse of red mud (the summer had been a wet one) across which there were planks for the girls to walk on. Some took a delight in somehow "falling" off these planks.

Miss Nielsen's years 1934-37

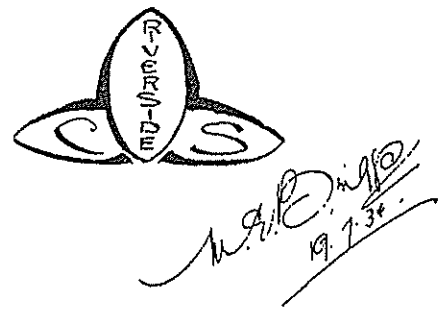
Eventually the school was organised with a full complement of students. The third year girls who transferred were divided into classes according to their origin: 3A was Drummoyne, 3B was Rozelle and 3C was Gladesville. Apparently the Drummoyne girls tended to consider themselves superior to the others generally so they thought their designation of 3A quite natural. The school had three Years with the Intermediate Certificate examination being taken at the end of Third Year.

Despite these difficulties discipline was instilled and maintained from the beginning. Courtesy was always insisted upon.

The uniform of navy box-plated tunic, navy blazer, white blouse, navy

velour hat in winter, panama in summer, black gloves and stockings was as strictly supervised as possible. At first the uniforms were a little scrappy. Some girls wore the ones they had from their previous school. Then with money short often only a tunic could be provided for a girl. When the tie was introduced, a narrow navy blue crocheted one with light blue horizontal stripes edged with yellow, again not all girls could afford one. Some had difficulties with hats and gloves too.

The ties and hat band with the school badge came after the school opened. The colours of junior navy with blue and light blue (yellow as a school colour came much later) were apparently suggested by the girls whose opinions were sought, though this is not confirmed. Similarly a competition was held among the pupils to design a school badge but it was an art teacher, Miss Minnie Briggs, who probably designed it. Though whether she improved on a student's design, a Betty (Elizabeth) Monroe is mentioned, or produced it entirely herself, is not clear.



Then, the basic uniform of navy box-pleated tunic and white blouse was common to government girls schools. The tunic was usually a heavy serge in winter and the more affluent girls had a summer-weight one, often in a tobralco. It was the badge and colours which distinguished the individual school.

Each morning, the entire school, in uniform, assembled in the quadrangle (surfaced) and were reminded of uniform regulations. Hats and gloves were to be worn in public, and always on public transport. When prefects



Class 1H with Miss Allen as class teacher

were elected, they gave orders which were expected to be obeyed. One ex-student comments feelingly: "our transport prefects would have made good Gestapo agents". Misbehaviour on public transport was punished with a detention. Three detentions sent the girls to Miss Nielsen's office.

The students were not allowed around the front of the school unless with a working party clearing areas for gardens and planting trees. Originally, too, the only girls allowed to use the front steps up from the bridge were those who came from Valentia Street by ferry. A number of girls who actually lived at Huntleys Point resented the fact that they had the extra distance to walk to the Victoria Road gate (the current and only entrance).

Most of the girls travelled by trams which were school specials. These were known as "toast rack trams" because of their appearance. They had running boards down both sides and separate compartments with bench seats facing each other the width of the tram. The conductor swung along the running-board like a monkey collecting fares and ringing the bell when necessary.

In the afternoons the girls assembled in groups according to destination. They were then marched down to the main gate where they waited for their appropriate tram. For the first few months of the school there were no school specials so the girls had to pack in often already crowded ones. By 1935 a traffic constable saw the girls across the road and an officer from the Road Traffic Authority was in attendance. School warning flags were shown. Fares were paid by parents; there were no free passes then.

Punctuality was expected. This sometimes caused anxiety for the girls who travelled first to Top Ryde. There they caught a Railway tram - if it was not crowded. If it was, the conductor would not let them on. Unless they caught a tram by 8.15 they would be late, and in trouble.

Then, again, often this city-bound tram from Weaver's Loop (near Mt St Margaret's Hospital) had to wait for

the tram from Sydney to arrive and "change points" as there was only a single track. Fortunately, when they were late for this reason so were some teachers too so their excuse was accepted. Gladesville girls had fewer anxieties since some trams started from Gladesville terminus.

From the Drummoyne side of the Parramatta River the girls often had the perfect excuse for lateness. The Gladesville Bridge then opened to let boats through. Sometimes this happened with the tram load of girls watching as a boat slowly made its way past. Then, the bridge would stick and not close. The girls would be joyously late with an undeniable excuse. Because this bridge lacked a footway, the ride across the bridge was "free" as long as the girls travelled between at least two stops. On sports day, however, the girls who played tennis at Drummoyne across the bridge were allowed a free ride without the two stops stipulation.

Discipline may have been strict and some of it may seem even pointless today, but an insistence on courtesy, consideration for others, punctuality and hard work had real benefits. Moreover, the discipline was also tempered with humanity, sympathy and good humour.

An ex-student writes:

I'm grateful to the discipline that prevailed at Riverside in those formative years for it was so beneficial to me in later years. I am proud that I attended Riverside Domestic Science School ... and am very grateful to those "old cranks" who helped to develop my character.

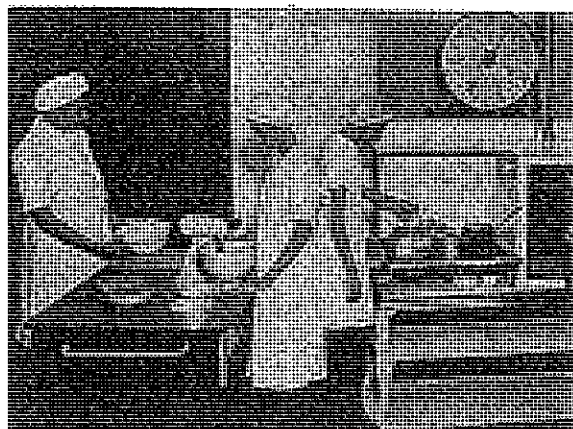
With the legal school leaving age fourteen years then, the class numbers began to decline from Second Year as girls reached this age. The Depression had mostly lifted but many girls who would have liked to have had further education could not afford to stay, not even for the Intermediate Certificate.

Sadly, many of these girls were then caught up in the war.

All girls took English, Mathematics,

History, Geography, Music, Art, Sport and Physical Culture. As a Domestic Science School, cooking, sewing and home management were important subjects. They were known as Domestic Science and were compulsory in First Year. Girls were taught to cook, set a table for all meals, launder and do housework.

Cooking lessons usually occupied a morning. A white crepe square-necked



Cookery: 1938

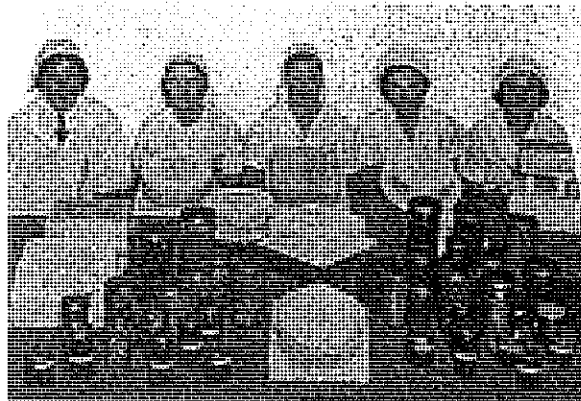
frock was worn with a triangular piece of material to cover the head to the eyebrows (no hair was allowed to show). The apron was blue and was used for laundry lessons.

A cooking lesson typically began with a demonstration followed by the



Icing of cakes

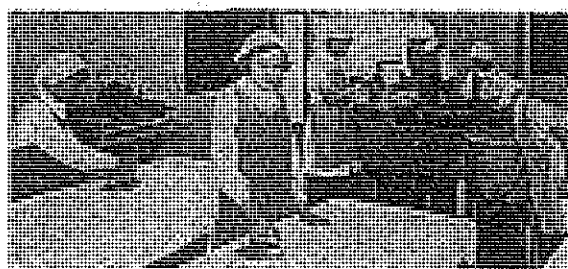
girls moving to the kitchens to cook. They began with making toast and tea, went on to the delights of pink, white or brown blanc mange, baked apple and stirred custard, baked rice and a bread and butter custard. Plain scones were mastered, steamed pudding and a grilled chop with vegetables came in later lessons.



Preserves and cakes made by the girls

Each week a number of girls were taught how to launder. One of the ex-students comments:

No washing machines in those days, gas coppers, a wonder we did not blow ourselves and the school up. We would boil the clothes in the copper adding Sapoline Powder, rinse in the concrete tubs - all white clothes had to be put through blue water - made with Blue Bag. Tableclothes and serviettes had to be starched. We made our starch out of Silver Star Starch.



Learning to launder

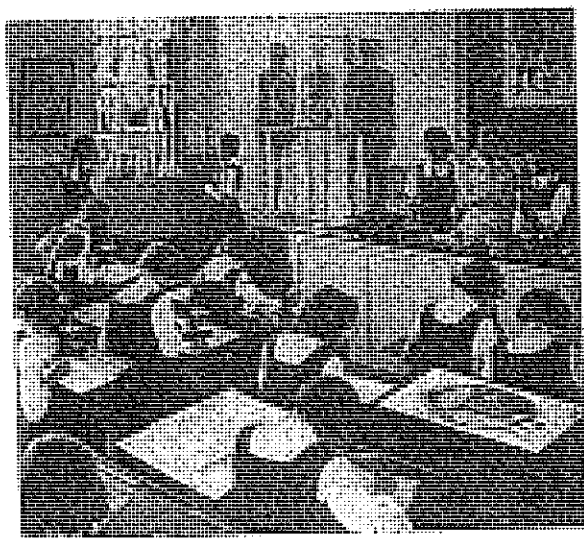
Some girls were also sent to learn Home Management in the Home Science "flat". There they made the bed, swept and polished and dusted, as

well as cooking a meal for two or three.

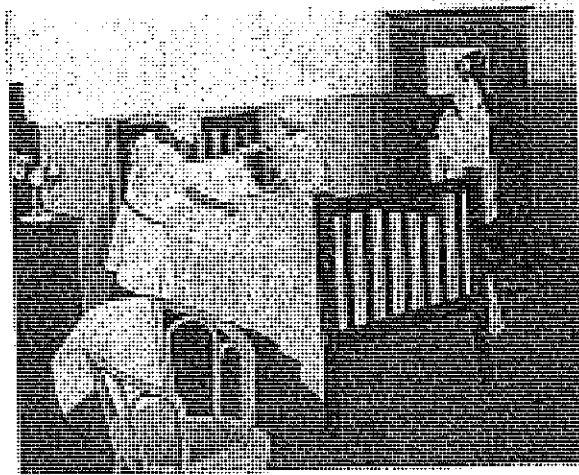


Arranging the dining room.
Home Management

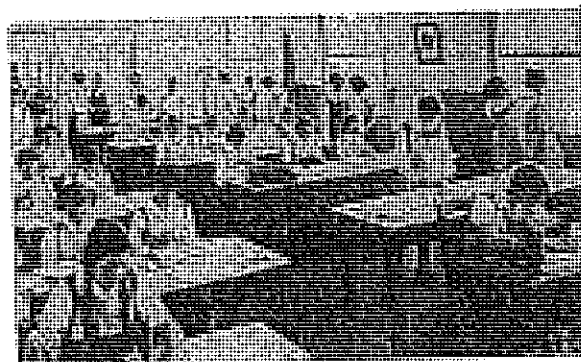
In Second and Third Years the girls could choose to take either a Home Economics course which included Elementary Science, Physiology (studied in a science room, not a laboratory), Cooking, Dietetics, Home Management, Laundry, Needlework and Dressmaking; or a Commerce Course which included Business Principles, Bookkeeping, Shorthand and Typing. Classes were large, usually averaging 50 girls. Miss Joyce Allen had a regular science class of 62.



Science and Physiology Class

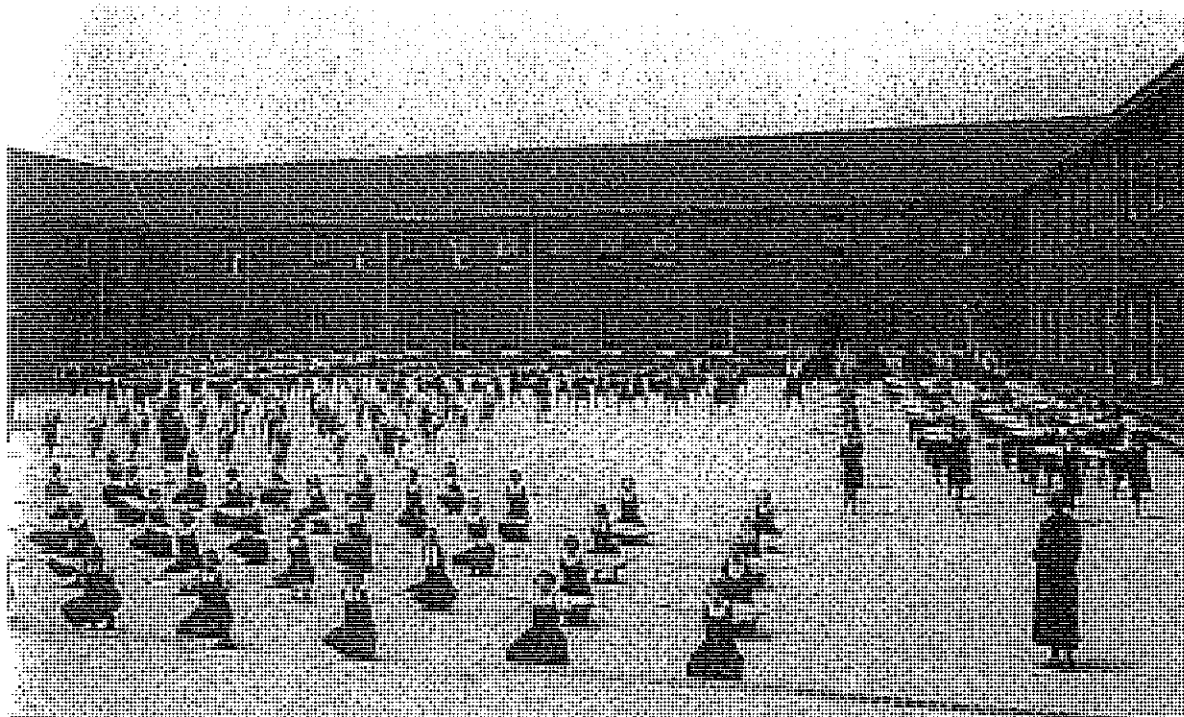


Above: Bed making - Home Management
Below: Dressmaking



Towards the middle of 1935, sport became more organised. At first, since the gym was not completed (it had one of the first sprung floors to be put in a school gym) and the grounds were not ready, sport was limited. Girls walked over mounds of dirt to go to classes and in front of the kitchens there was uncleared scrub. A small part had been cleared for assembly but sport could not be played there. Vigoro or rounders were played in the reserve opposite and physical culture was held in the quad (see opposite).

In 1935 clearing had been undertaken by a fathers' "working bee" organised by the P & C Association, so some of the school grounds could be used. As well, the grounds of the Mental Hospital were used for basketball and vigoro. Hockey was played on the reserve. Tennis courts were used across the bridge in Drummoyne and



Physical exercises, 1937

girls would go swimming at Drum-moyne Baths.

One of the teachers of the day, Miss Joyce Allen, who was just out of training, had the burden of most of the swimming supervision of the girls fall on her. She was often the only one to wear a swimming costume and speaks feelingly of having to deal with over 200 girls in the baths while her much older colleagues sat in the shelter knitting or crocheting.

Girls will be girls, whether in the 1930s or 1980s. A favourite prank seemed to be to slide down the bannisters. Two ex-students write of this. One slid down feet first into Miss McCroe's chest. Another slid down to be met at the bottom by Miss Nielsen. In the early days too there were no fences so some girls wandered down to the water's edge at lunch-time and somehow managed not to hear the bell! Some of these girls have remained close friends up to today. Two such friends write of travelling to Hong Kong this year together.

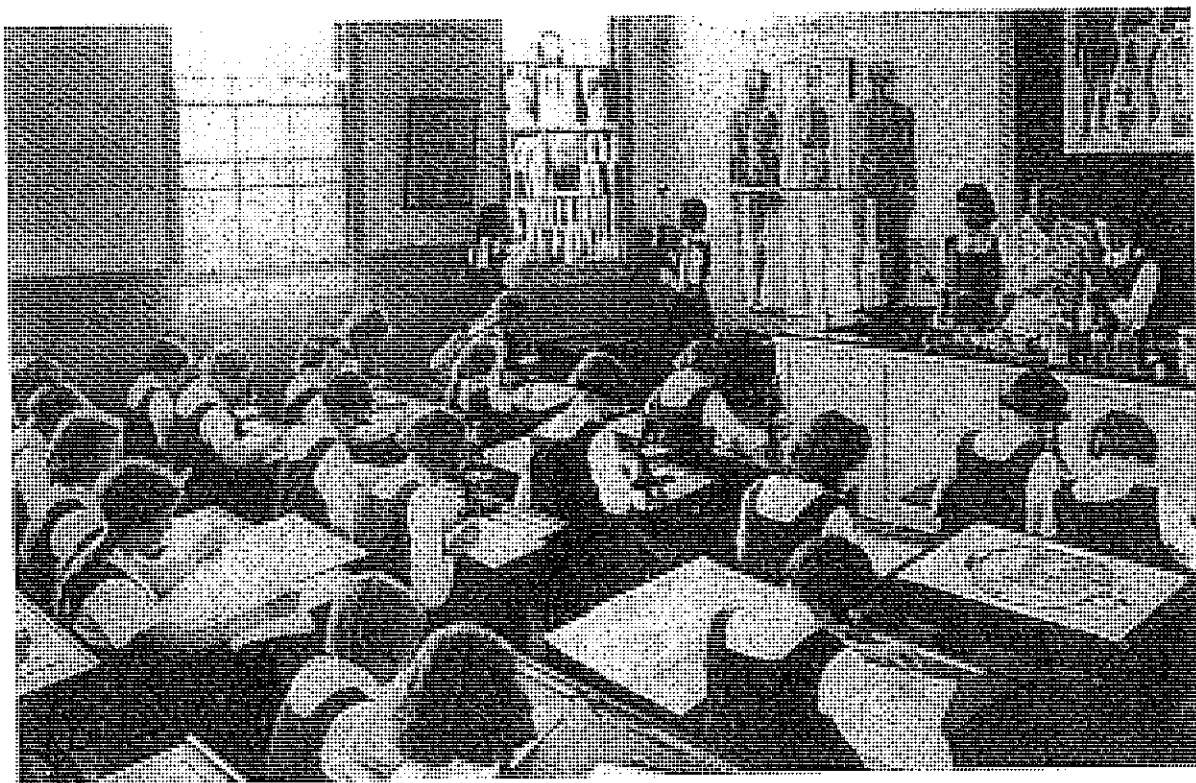
Memories of teachers feature largely in the reminiscences of girls of the time.

Miss Minnie Briggs was an admired Art teacher. She apparently had an immaculate hairdo which one girl thought was a wig until she was assured by one of Miss Briggs' friends years later that it was not. Miss Briggs apparently brushed her hair for ten minutes each morning and evening, then moulded it round her head. It took thirty hair pins to keep it in place.

An ex-student tells ruefully of being given 99½ out of 100 for her Art. When someone asked Miss Briggs why she did not give 100 the reply was: "Nobody is perfect!"

Miss Allen also testifies to Miss Briggs' sense of humour. Her Art room was near Miss Allen's Physiology room and she delighted in pulling faces at Miss Allen dissecting a frog, or something similar, as she went by - quite unseen by the girls.

Miss Allen of swimming fame was a Physiology teacher but in fact taught nine subjects. Except for Art, Home Economics and some Commercial teachers, all teachers taught a range of subjects, with perhaps one specialty. They taught in class all day with no



Science Class, 1937, with class teacher Miss Allen

periods off. Miss Allen says she was up to one o'clock most mornings preparing lessons and had to come in on Saturdays to prepare typed notes for the science lessons. There were no text books then.

Tallish, slim, with dark short hair worn in a deep wave over one eyebrow she was much admired. She is described as moving in the grounds with "always a group around her like the satellites around the sun". Miss Allen's beautiful copperplate handwriting is also remembered.

A Miss Smith is remembered mostly for her fur coat she wore. The girls thought she had to be very wealthy. She was also known to be a smoker who "would streak off to the staff room for a smoke".

It is not surprising that many of the teachers are recalled so vividly. So many are paid tribute to for their concern for the girls, and their unstinting efforts in extending their horizons.

The 1st Assistant (Deputy Headmistress), Miss Mary Lamond, is remembered for her genuine interest in the girls and for play productions. One of her girls recalls being taken in a

group into town to a church hall to perform the "Mad Hatter's Tea Party" and that they "all thought a lot of her".

As Deputy she was responsible for most of the organising of the school and was a small bundle of energy.

Girls were also taken on excursions to concerts at Sydney Town Hall, to Shakespearean plays and to films at the Bligh Street Theatre (probably The Savoy). The films were based on books studied at the time. A Tale of Two Cities and The Old Curiosity Shop are recalled. At least once a year, too, the art classes had a field day at the Art Gallery and went sketching monuments and old buildings.

On 19 and 20 March 1938 at the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Foundation of Australia, Domestic Science schools represented countries of the United Kingdom by doing national dances at the Showground. Riverside represented England and over 200 Second Year girls took part.

Miss Nielsen, the Headmistress, was an important and imposing tall woman held in awe by the girls, some of whom thought she was very old



Jean Cunningham (English Girl) and
Dorothy Doig (English Boy)
taken at RAS Showground

because she always wore a longish black frock, low-heeled black shoes, and glasses. She was fair skinned, probably an inheritance from her Danish ancestry, with shining silver hair. She had a real empathy for her girls. One relates:

She endeared herself to me by saving me from an embarrassing situation. Singing classes were always held in the Assembly Hall and our music teacher, Miss Walsh (attractive but rather vain), decided one day that each girl was to come out front and sing up and down the scales to her accompaniment on the piano. Since I can't sing a note in tune I refused and was promptly sent to Miss Nielsen. The dear soul was weeding the garden outside her office and when I explained the situation, she merely said 'Never mind dear, I can't sing either, so you can

come and help me in the garden each singing lesson.' I did this for the practical lessons but annoyed Miss Walsh greatly by topping the class in Music Theory.

Miss Nielsen appreciated the site and worked to enhance it and instill a love for it in the girls. One recalls:

My first recollection of Miss Nielsen was when she did the 'rounds' of each classroom. She asked the students to stand up and look out of the windows and appreciate the magnificent view all around. She told us just how lucky we were and told us that we had the best location and view of any school in New South Wales and I do agree with her.



Miss Nielsen after she had retired with
(L to R) staff, Maisie Golding and Corinda
Clarke in Womens Army Nursing Service uniform

This view sometimes proved distracting as one girl reports that a

Class 2A.

CENTRAL DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOL

RIVERSIDE.

TERM REPORT.

1934.

Lucy Bryant.

Number in Class: 40

Position in Class: 9

Writing	80.	Lucy is a good student and her results are pleasing but Arithmetic and Algebra need more attention. E.S.
Spelling.....	82.	
English	90.	
Arithmetic.....	46.	
Algebra	58.	
History	45.	Good etc.
Geography.....	77.	Good. m.
Physiology.....	78.	Good. E.S.
Business Principles	92.	Excellent etc.
Typing	46.	Good. E.S.
Shorthand.....	98.	Excellent E. F.
Art	70.	Good m B
Needlework.....	71.	Good. m.
Dietetics.....	66.	
Cookery		
Laundry		
Home Management		



Class Teacher: *E. Smith*

Mistress: *C. Oulsen*

A. W. Bryant

CENTRAL DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOL.
RIVERSIDE.

ANNUAL REPORT ~~ON~~ LUCY BRYANT.

NUMBER IN CLASS.....41

POSITION IN CLASS.....6th.

English.....	83½
Spelling.....	100
Maths 1	67
Arithmetic.....	75
History.....	57
Geography.....	55
Physiology.....	84
Bus. Principles.....	55½
Typing.....	72
Shorthand.....	78
Art.....	83
Needlework.....	65

*Very pleasing results. Lucy
has worked well this year. E.S.*

*S. L. L. L.
Satisfactory mt.*

Very good E.S.

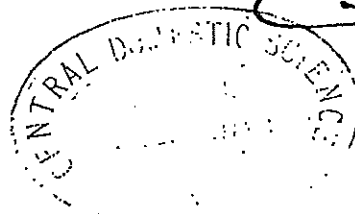
Good E.S.

Good E.S.

Good work. mt.

Good mt.

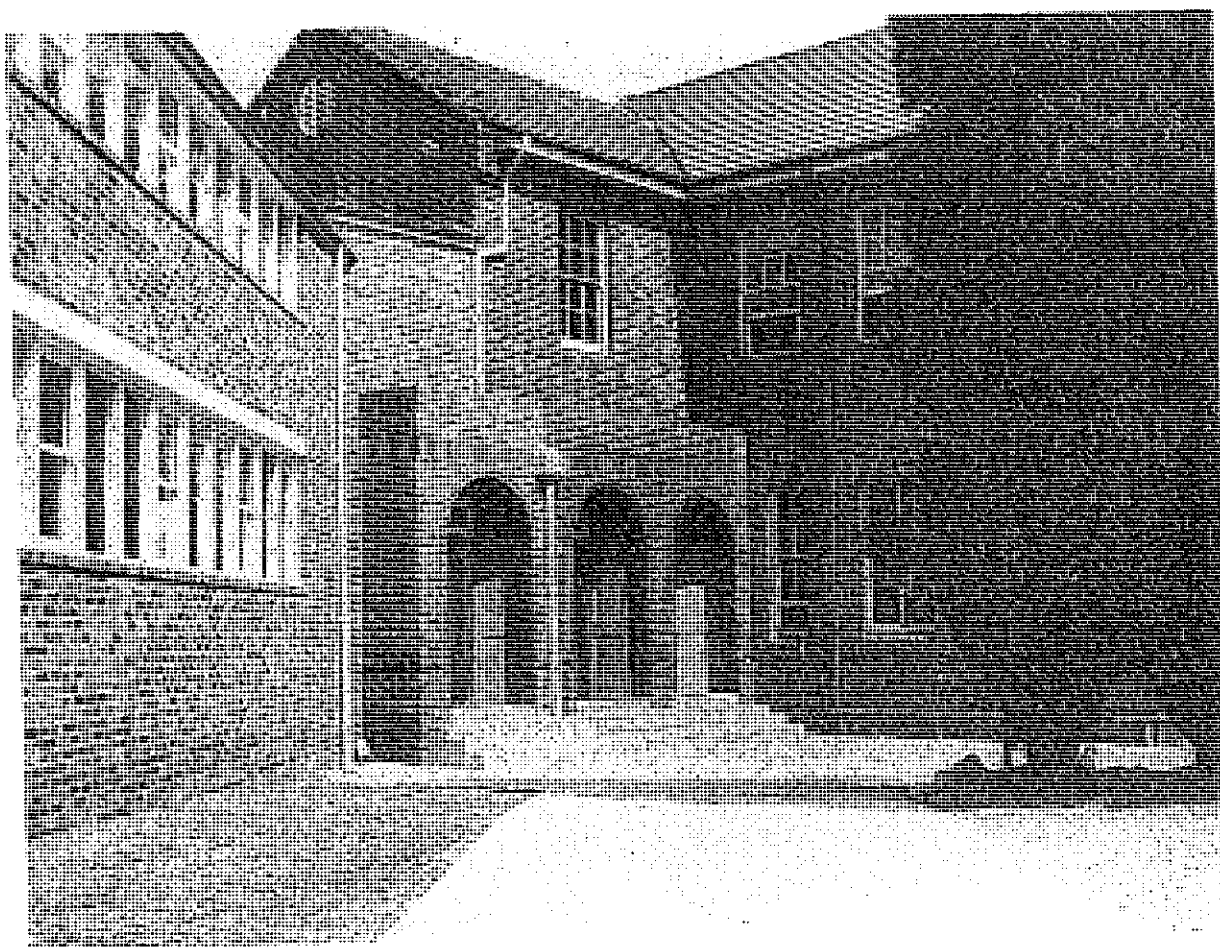
Class Teacher... *E. Smith*.....
Mistress.....



E. L. L. L.

6-12-31

*A. W. Bryant
E. E. Bryant.*



The pines planted by Miss Nielsen

ferry cruised up the river twice weekly with music playing on board. Girls sitting near the window, like her, naturally wanted to see what was going on and usually ended up in trouble for inattention.

Miss Nielsen was a tree planter of some note. The oleanders and pines were planted in her time as were some two thousand trees and shrubs. Trees were bought for planting by the girls, especially on August Arbor Days. On the first such Day, every girl in the school planted a tree. Money for these trees was often raised at market days.

Miss Nielsen herself usually arrived at school at 7.00 am to plant trees or work in her garden. She was a tremendously hard worker, much loved by her staff who called her Con (not to her face). "Con" was formed from the initials of her name: Camellia Olivia Nielsen.

Other teachers of the first years

included: Maisie Golding, Dolly McCroe, Beth Forsythe, Isabel Smalley, Miss Ena Smith, Winifred Withers, Peggy Schroder, Isabel Wilson, Marie Hegarty, Edna Burton, Gwyneth Williams, Emily Hughes, Myrtle Addis, Corinda Clarke, Margaret Maud Graham,



The school in 1936

Doris Dickinson, Grace Peterson, Winifred Metcalf, Winifred Drury, Helen Fox, Joyce Wheatley and Jean Hart (she taught Home Science but became an Inspector of Physical Education). Similarly, Grace Ohlson (Home Science) went on to be a Home Economics Inspector.

So often, however, Miss Nielsen seemed engaged in struggles to establish, equip, and run the school, working very long hours. She had to deal with all official correspondence, typing her own letters. There was no clerical assistance then. Sometimes the letter was the result of a complaint by the P & C Association who, in the early years, seemed to create difficulties rather than help. They thought the front fences "unsightly" and wanted them replaced. Miss Nielsen was asked to report (see pp. 22 and 23):

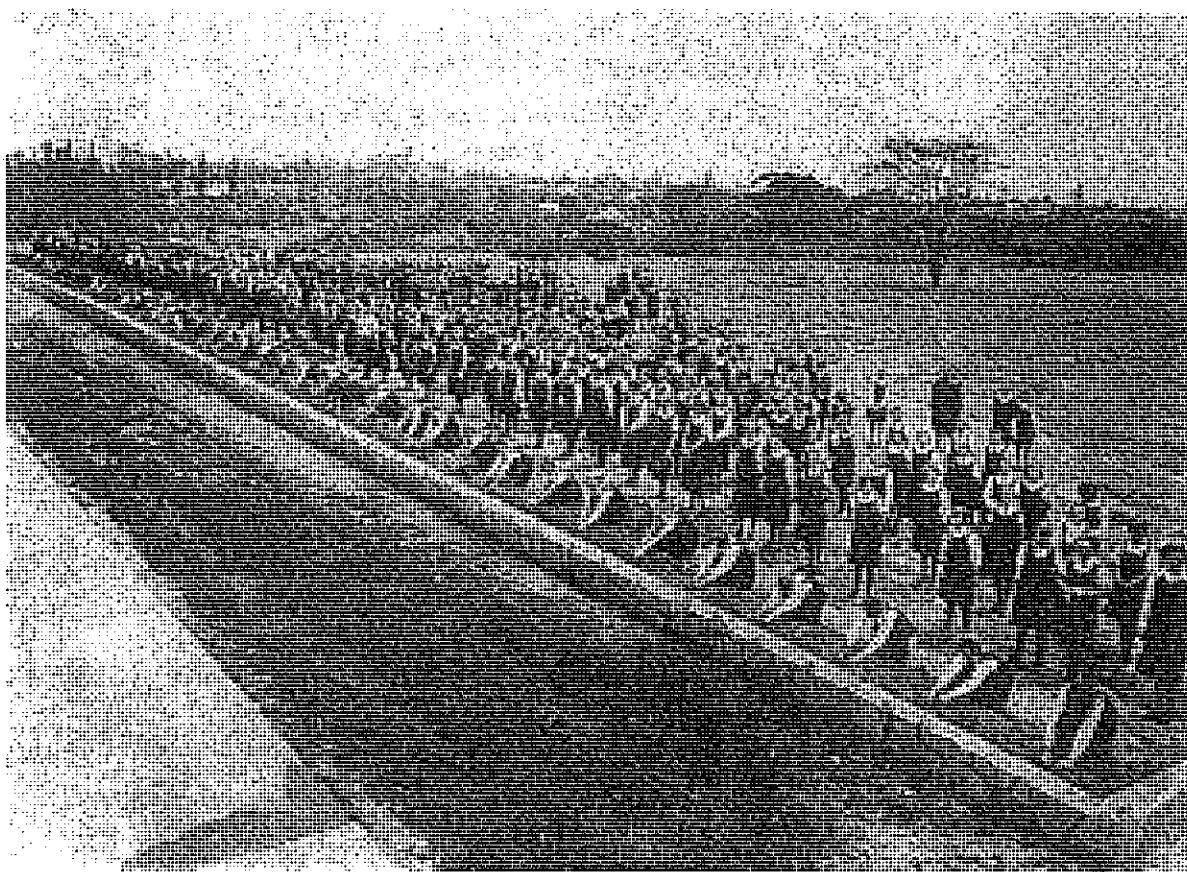
I consider [she wrote] that a school fence should be of such a nature to prevent boys etc. from climbing over

easily. The fences are not unsightly - but are of a suitable variety. Owing to the isolated position of the school, strong and protective fences are required.

"Boys etc." seemed to be a worry of hers. A notice warning trespassers was requested on 24 July 1934 because of the number of "lads" playing cricket, men playing golf and people walking dogs in the school grounds.

An application for the use of the grounds for a cricket competition was refused by the Headmistress. Similarly a request by the Scouts for a bonfire to celebrate a Jubilee was "entirely opposed" by Miss Nielsen. She objected to "fuel" in the grounds and wrote (2 May 1935) that it would be impossible to prevent couples from getting into secluded spots and the Sergeant of Police had told her it would require at least one hundred police to carefully supervise the grounds.

If her reactions seem excessive,



Arbour Day at Riverside 1934

Riverside

DEPARTMENT OF
35565*26.APR.1934
EDUCATION

Unightly fences

The new Domestic Science School erected on the commanding site at Huntley's Point, between the junction of the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, Sydney Harbour, is at once a notable landmark, and for scenic surroundings may be classed as one of the beauty spots of the world.

"RIVERSIDE"
HUNTLEY'S POINT

Parents & Citizens' Association

CENTRAL
DOMESTIC SCIENCE
HIGH SCHOOL

24/4/34.

President:
J. H. CATTS
(Huntley's Point)

The Director of Education,
Education Department,
Sydney.

Dear Sir,

Vice-Presidents:
C. M. CHATFIELD
(Drummoynes)

R. McDONALD
(Huntley)

At a meeting of our Association held on the 18th inst., it was decided to protest against the unightly fences at the Victoria Road and Huntley's Point Road frontages of the new "Riverside" Domestic Science School.

Treasurer:
H. R. HENLEY
(Huntley's Point)

We would suggest that the existing 6 ft. fence be replaced by a small picket fence, at the above-mentioned frontages.

Secretary:
F. J. HOWLAND
(Farm St., Gladesville)

A favourable reply will oblige.

Yours faithfully,

Executive Committee:
Ald. ARNOLD
(Huntley's Hill)

Ald. CHAMBERLAIN
(Ryde)

H. EZOLD
(Drummoynes)

J. C. FORBES
(Huntley's Point)

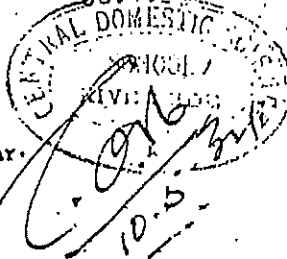
J. LOW
(Boronla)

H. A. SHELLEY
(Drummoynes)

R. SMITH
(Gladesville)

Monthly Meetings:
THIRD WEDNESDAY

Ack. "H.



F. J. Howland
Hon. Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

B34/35565.

RIVERSIDE.

Unsightly Fences.

The Headmistress,
Riverside Central Domestic Science School,
GLADESVILLE.

Will you please furnish a report in
connection with this matter.

B.C.HARKNESS,

Chief Inspector,

per *Et*

9 MAY 1934

10.5.34.
CENTRAL DOMESTIC SCIENCE SCHOOL, RIVERSIDE. 10th May.]

REPORT CONCERNING.

I do not agree with the remarks re. fences, of the Secretary of the
Riverside, P. & C. A..

I consider that a school fence should be of such a nature to prevent
boys etc..from climbing over easily. The fences are not unsightly--but
are of a suitable variety.

Owing to the isolated position of the school, strong and protective
fences are required.

11 MAY 1934

MISTRESS.

Advise the correspondent that the Department cannot
agree that the fencing is unsightly but is suitable for
protection against trespassers and is necessary by reason of
the isolated position of the school.

*Letter copy
to Mistress*

10.5.34

the very extensive grounds and isolated nature of the school (there were no houses nearby nor outside lights then) were reasons for genuine nervousness.

Miss Nielsen's arguments for rejecting the Gymnasium as a venue for "social purposes" reveal a thoroughly reasonable woman.

DEPARTMENT OF
55078-10 JUL 1954
EDUCATION
CENTRAL DOMESTIC
RIVERSIDE.

9th July, 1954.

REPLY TO ENCLOSED. USE OF GYMNASIUM FOR SOCIAL PURPOSES.

I do not think this request should be granted. It is too general I should think that each time the Gymnasium is required, an application could be made for same --stating the form of social entertainment to be held.

The dance held in the Hall on the opening night of the school was far from satisfactory.

The hall is not very suitable for social purposes for the following reasons:-

1. The isolated position of the school.
2. The absence of outside lights.
3. The dangerous nature of some parts of the grounds.
4. There is only one set of lavatories--no accommodation at all for both sexes.
5. The Hall has only one entrance, and in case of accident it would be difficult to remove a crowd quickly.
6. There is no platform, so the hall is only suitable for entertainments of the lecture type.
7. As it is a gymnasium, dances should be prohibited.
8. There is no piano in the room.

Nielsen
Headmistress
Letter 34
17.7.54

On 14 August 1935, the Old Girls' Union (sic) did hold a social in the gym to raise funds for the school. Staff and Old Girls attended at a charge of one shilling per head entrance. Two men tried to force their way past without paying. The caretaker helped prevent them, not without some argument.

They were members of the P & C Association who duly complained in writing. They claimed there was smoking going on and that supervision was poor and Miss Nielsen was not present. Miss Nielsen somewhat tersely denied the smoking, stated the social was well-conducted, that she was present, but at the time in a back room helping to prepare the supper. It was then that she pointed out that the P & C Association had been little help whatever to the school since its inception. It would seem the working bee to clear the field was the only constructive action the P & C of those early years carried out.

The Caretaker, who acted as door-man, was a Mr Myers, appointed between June and October of 1935. The Cottage had been approved and built by a Mr Stanton whose tender for £769.7.0 was accepted.



Mr Myers with a Miss K. Thursley

Another worry occurred for Miss Nielsen with the school's official opening on 9 June 1934. At a rehearsal the girls were arranged in special positions to practise for the ceremony. One girl asked where the Guides would stand when they came in their uniform. She was told that since Miss Nielsen knew of no other arrangements all girls were to be where placed and not cause confusion. They should also wear school uniforms. This was distorted by the girl's Guide Captain as an instruction by Miss Nielsen to the girls that if they attended in Guide uniform "they need not return to school as they would not be wanted back".

The P & C Association had invited the Guides and their District Commissioner presumably without Miss Nielsen's knowledge. The Division Commissioner complained to the Department and Miss Nielsen was asked to explain herself to the Chief Inspector.

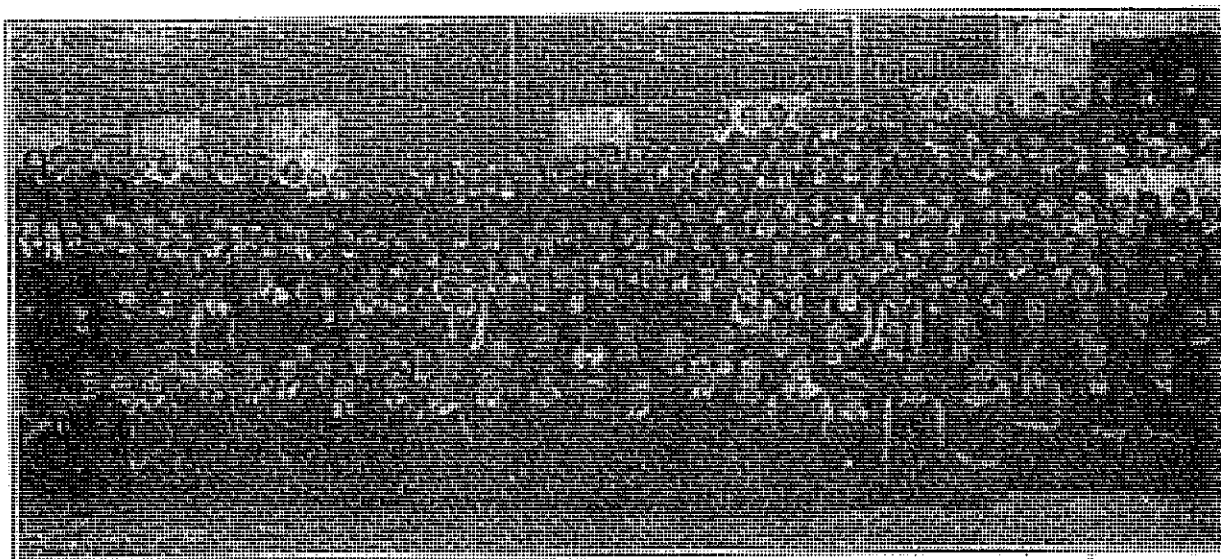
The Opening could hardly have been a pleasure for her: the detailed organisation for the ceremony to begin with then the dance at night in the gym which was "far from satisfactory" and in July a complaint made against her from the Girl Guides Association.

Fetes, Market Days and an Arboretum

Unaware of these tribulations, the girls held fetes and market days, usually in the quadrangle, to raise money. School Home Science staff also raised money by cooking and selling cakes and scones.

In 1936 a decision was made to erect an arboretum at Riverside. Arboretum means "a place in which rare trees and shrubs are cultivated for scientific or educational purposes". The arboretum, approved by the Minister, was designed by an honorary architect, Sir Charles Rosenthal. The design was for an octagonal bush-house with four adjoining glass houses, each 12 ft by 6 ft, creating a Maltese Cross.

A Mr Wearne of the Australian



Pupils at the official opening of the new Domestic Science School

Forestry League originated the idea and donated the timber. Miss Nielsen had apparently tried, with success, to interest the League previously in the school and tree planting. The cost of the arboretum was £300 donated by the League, Sydney business firms and Riverside well-wishers.

The official opening of the arboretum by the Education Minister, Mr Drummond, took place on 1 May 1936. It was named after Walter Froggatt who was an entomologist with the Forestry Commission and whose books did much to popularise entomology with the public, including children. He

had also grown trees at his own house for planting at Riverside.

At the end of 1937 Miss Nielsen retired after four years of outstanding work in establishing the school. Distinctive features of the school were already apparent: care and appreciation of a superb site; concern for the girls' welfare in all aspects by a group of excellent teachers, most of whom were genuinely dedicated; and an affection for and pride in their school by the majority of the students attested to by the numbers of comments, both oral and written, that have been made. Here are some:

I pay tribute to my old school that, because of the good grounding there, by the teachers, I have had a good job ever since and have been able to be gainfully employed just about ever since I left the school...

It was a beautiful school...

... school was a nice secure place in our lives - a place we could depend on to always be the same. I must admit I shed quite a few tears the day I walked out the gate for the last time...

It was a good time I spent there and I made good friends who I still see now...



16th November, 1934.

This is to certify, that Kathleen Booth was till today a pupil doing 2nd year work in the II A class, at the above mentioned school. This month she sat for the Superior Public Schools' Certificate Examination.

Kathleen, who is earnest, eager and enthusiastic has displayed steady endeavour and enterprise during the year.

She is obedient, punctual and reliable. Her conduct is very satisfactory.

M. Nielsen
Headmistress

Student reference by Miss Nielsen

Perhaps this letter speaks for all the girls.

Joan Clarke

Editor & Researcher

1/10 Rangers Rd, Cremorne 2090

Tel: 909-3823

24 July 1984

The Headmistress,
Riverside Girls' High School,
Huntley's Point Road,
GLADESVILLE. N.S.W. 2111

Dear Madam,

My ex-teacher, Miss Joyce Allen, has told me of your plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our old school, suggesting I pass on to you my own memories.

My name was Joan Willmott and I first attended Riverside in 1935, as a student in Class 2B. I left there at the end of 1936 after gaining my Intermediate Certificate with three A's and three B's. Certainly not the school's most brilliant pass but the fact that I passed at all is due to the wonderful teaching and encouragement I was given by the staff. As a result of polio at the age of two, I had had very little formal schooling in my primary school years. I was sadly lacking in much of the basic knowledge that I should have acquired at an earlier age but thanks to my class teacher, Miss Smith, and the teachers of special subjects, I was given every assistance to catch up with my school mates.

In particular I owe special thanks to two of those teachers who continued to encourage and guide me well into adult life. One is Miss Allen who is still my kind friend. Joyce Allen taught me physiology at school but outside of school hours she introduced me to a new world, wider and richer than I had ever known — the beauty of music, literature, science; the company of people with enquiring minds; the stimulation of new places. She took me on my first visit to the Blue Mountains, my first interstate train ride to Adelaide and many other trips. Most wonderful of all, she encouraged me to write, giving substance to my secret ambition, replacing my feeling of inadequacy with confidence. The fact that I have made some sort of career, somewhat belatedly, as a writer (and editor), owes much to her.

The other teacher who greatly influenced my life, my outlook and my career, was our Assistant Headmistress, Mary Lamond. Only now do I realise what a remarkable woman she was, with that rare and special quality that I can only call greatness. Warm, loving, intelligent, with tremendous energy, she had the power to discipline, firmly, without ever alienating a child. There was a wisdom in her, an intuitive, soul-discerning wisdom, such as I have only ever encountered in one other human being. When I left school and was about to re-enter hospital for the most important orthopaedic operation of my life, she brought me a gift. I still have it: a copy of J. M. Barrie's Courage. Apart from a few children's books, it was the first book I ever owned. Throughout my life Miss Lamond sent me other books, always with uncanny accuracy fulfilling my need for a certain writer, a philosophy, a literary enrichment, at the right moment. Mary Lamond's work as a teacher and an innovator, especially with mentally and emotionally handicapped children, deserves an honoured place in the records of this country's educational development. Perhaps a tribute to her in whatever you publish to celebrate Riverside's half century will help to ensure that.

Generally, my memories of Riverside are very happy ones, even though most of us, I believe, came from families where the fathers were unemployed, where there were no luxuries, barely adequate food and pocket money was unheard of. I know there were cases of real poverty and I suspect strongly that many of the school's teachers contributed to the alleviation of those cases. We were very much a family. I shall always be grateful that I was, for those two wonderful years, a Riverside girl.

I do hope some of the above is of interest. Happy 50th Anniversary!

Sincerely,

Joan Clarke

Miss Smith's years: 1938 - 2 May 1939

Miss Josephine Smith's years were brief since she died, it is said, from a thrombosis following an operation in her second year as Headmistress. Her impact then was not great except that a Memorial Rose Garden was created, dedicated to her. This was lovingly tended by girls for years afterwards until it vanished when a new building

went up, or so it is believed.

To replace this and to pacify the numbers of ex-students aggrieved by its loss, a new rose garden has been planted in a brick square in the wall at the front of the Hall near the present Canteen.

Miss Smith's successor, Miss Wicht, was appointed on 26 June 1939, almost as World War II began. Many would consider this appropriate.

The war years 1939-45

Until 1941, the school functioned as before, but with the fall of Singapore and Pearl Harbour the students actually started to feel the effects at school of the world at war.

Student behaviour and uniforms

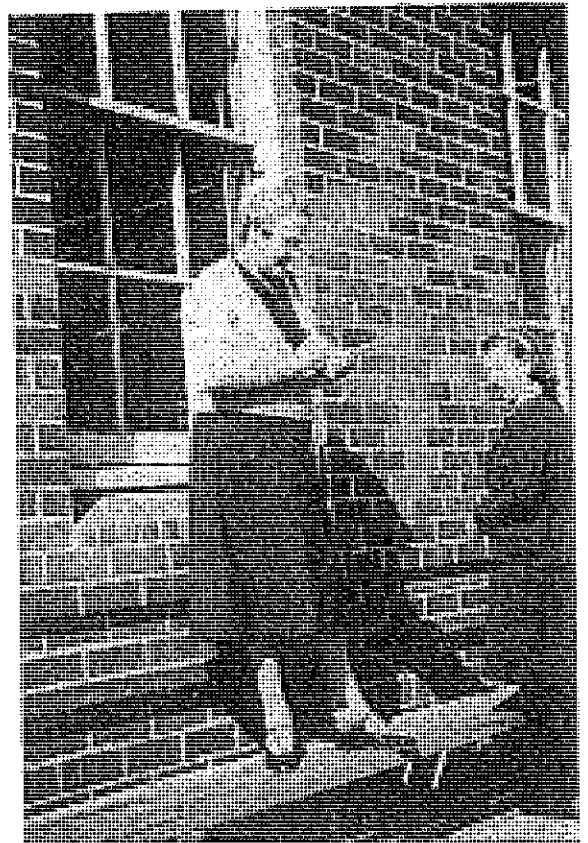
School rules were clearly laid out and full uniform was to be worn at all times. The uniform still consisted of a navy tunic, usually woollen, worn in all seasons. The students did not mind this in winter when temperatures dropped as there was no form of heating in any of the classrooms, but it must have been intolerable on hot summer days, clad as they were as well in compulsory black stockings and heavy wool. It would have been better if, like a true squatter's hat, the students' straw Panama hats had come complete with sweat bands.

Anyone who felt slightly tempted to "dare to be different" was soon put in her place, as one past student tells, still reeling after forty-two years at her treatment by the Headmistress, Miss Wicht. She related that she felt very reckless one day and wore a summer dress in red and white check to school. Naturally she stood at the back of the Assembly numbering about eight hundred girls, which always took place in the quadrangle, hoping not to be noticed.

Miss Wicht, a very austere woman, always, according to staff and students of the time, wore her own version of a uniform every day, without fail. This consisted of a dark navy serge skirt, a creamy-white silk blouse buttoned to the neck, black pointed-toe shoes with a strap across the instep, a fawn cardigan in winter, no make-up, and

her hair always in a bun. Miss Wicht spotted this "renegade" and, without the aid of any microphone, demanded "the girl in the table cloth dress step to the front of the Assembly". The "dressing down" she received as a result of her originality that past student has never forgotten.

Miss Wicht, who had been born in 1885, was a teacher in the old style. She had begun as a pupil teacher in 1902 at Tumut and, in 1905, gained a scholarship by examination for admission to Teacher Training School, from which she went to teach in Junee, in 1908. She taught at a variety of



Miss Wicht taking an early morning assembly

schools during her career, ranging from Bathurst and Orange to Leichhardt, South Strathfield and Cleveland Street. She was appointed Headmistress at Riverside Domestic Science School on 26 June 1939.

Miss Wicht was a strict but fair Headmistress, although many of the girls were so in awe of her that they feared her. When she walked across the quad at recess, groups would stop talking until she went by. She always called the students "little maidens", and would use a rather quaint vocabulary at times. When holding up a lost umbrella at assembly she would enquire, "Which little maiden has left her parasol behind?"

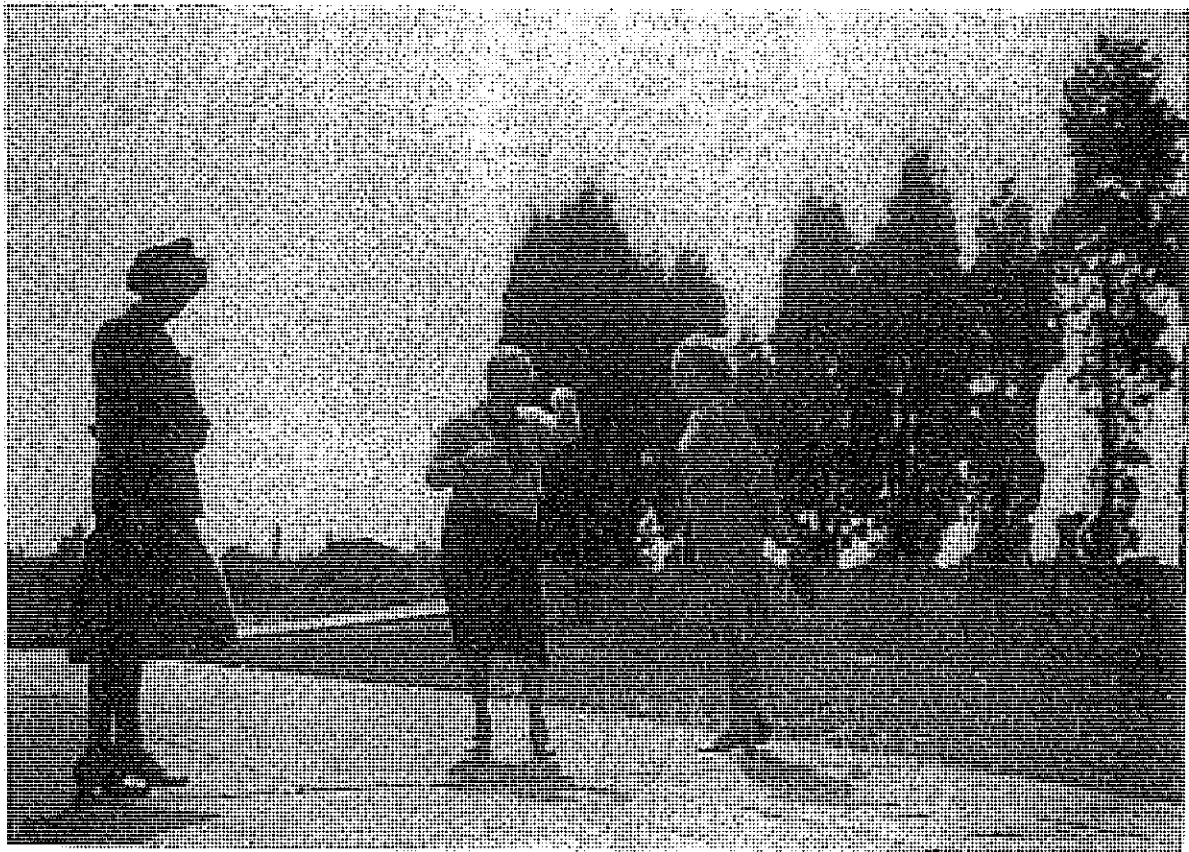
Miss Wicht believed that if you wanted a job well done you did it yourself. She counted all the school and tuckshop takings herself, but sent Mr Myers to catch a tram up to the Gladesville bank each day after lunch. Miss Wicht was an unusual woman in

many ways. She drove an ancient open touring car at a time when few owned cars at all and even fewer were women. An ex-student writes that she believed Miss Wicht loved the school despite her severity.

Her devotion to her chosen career was reflected in the hours she kept - she did not leave school before 6 pm - and in her efforts to provide an uplifting environment for the girls.

She goes on to say she has Miss Wicht to thank for her love of beautiful china and glassware. Miss Wicht had cabinets at school full of her own exquisite china, cut glass and silver. These were used by the girls when serving meals to VIPs in the Home Science "flat". She also furnished her office and other parts of the school with carpets, antiques and paintings - supposedly from Anthony Horderns.

Miss Wicht continued the planting



Miss Wicht instructing staff, Miss O'Connor and Miss Ward, on playground duty

tradition. The native shrubs on the front lawn, eucalypts, wattles and other natives as well as the Liquid-ambers near the entrance were all planted by Miss Wicht.

Strolling through the gardens at the front of the school in the hope of catching a cooling breeze closer to the water was another rule girls never dared break. This area remained totally out of bounds.

Classes began and ended with the ringing of a large hand bell and one only hopes the teacher who rang this did not develop the arm of a Sergeant Major of the time!

Punishments

Breaking of school rules such as lateness or disobedience were punished not only by a much dreaded lecture from Miss Wicht but by detention, raps across the knuckles with a wooden ruler, paper duties (a wartime forerunner to "Do the Right Thing"?). What was a "naughty" girl at Riverside during the war years? One now demure mother happily claims that she was the naughtiest girl in the school in 1945. She did not like school at all, so each day she would get the school tram from Rozelle to Gladesville, along with the other students, and as they went dutifully up the path to the school grounds she went and hid, until her discovery, in what is now the soccer field opposite the school.

During the war years this area was a rough bush land with plenty of places to hide, so the "naughty girl" hid there till she saw the other students leaving. Each afternoon the students lined up and walked in neat lines under the teacher's careful eye down to the tram stops. The unrepentant student somehow melted back into the throng. But she was finally caught by the Truancy Officer and had to go through the trauma of a hearing at the Albion Street Children's Court.

Another shocking flouting of school rules was to actually hide in the toilet at the end of the day and wait till the girls' trams had left. The girl then

blithely waited for the boys' tram and not only had an exciting ride home but enjoyed the reputation of being a Scarlet Woman! If she missed her correct tram home in the afternoon because she was on detention it was just bad luck. Some students sadly found it was a long walk home.

The Tuckshop

Mostly the first year students sat in the Tuckshop to eat their lunch. There was no health consciousness as today. Before war-time sugar rationing lollies were freely on sale - perhaps in opposition to the "corner shop" at the end of the bridge which was strictly out of bounds to students.

There seemed to be no price war, however, as in both places most lollies were a penny each. The corner shop sold butter balls for a penny a bag. The favourite at the tuckshop was chocolate frogs with caramel centres at the amazing price of 1d each. Nuts and ice cream were available at the tuckshop but there were no sandwiches. This is not surprising when you consider there was no allowance for hiring staff and no mothers club.

The biggest prize was Violet Crumbles but these rarely ever made it to the school tuckshop because when they finally reached ordinary shops the word would spread and people (young and old) would line up for them.

The sweets in the tuckshop were sold by teachers rostered on for duty.

Wartime activities

Although Riverside's grounds were much more extensive there were no tennis courts and this was the area, at the front of the school, where the bomb shelters were placed. However, though there were air raid drills, with specific bell warnings and classes filing neatly and efficiently from the building, many of the students of that time remember little of it. However, many of the students do remember that all the windows in the school

were taped as a precaution against blasts, and Riverside students who lived close to the waterfront at Balmain were actually evacuated to the Blue Mountains area, much the same as children in London were evacuated to the English countryside. This evacuation however, in Sydney, only lasted for a year and those Balmain Riverside students were able to return to their homes and school as before.

One ex-student can remember vividly seeing big posters at the Gladesville Tram Terminus in February 1942, informing all the people on that tram route that Singapore had fallen to the Japanese. It was such a particularly memorable piece of news because all the students of that era had been taught that "the sun would never set on the British Empire" and that the British Empire was invincible. A sobering historical incident even to girls of 14 and 15 years and, according to her, Australians suddenly felt very vulnerable.

The Home Science classes helped in their own way with the war effort by knitting khaki socks, gloves and balaclavas for the Red Cross who provided the wool, to distribute overseas. Some of the students of that time that I spoke to, confessed that it was their mothers who finished off most of this knitting at home!

Many of the girls hoped that their knitting efforts might end up on the hands of some American soldier who looked like Robert Taylor. He was one of the girls' great "heart throbs" of the time.

Most of the girls followed some American star as there was no cult figure in Australia during that period. Most popular music and films of interest came from the USA. Those students of that era, much the same as in the following twenty years, flocked to the pictures on a Saturday afternoon for 6d per ticket! But even there the girls were reminded of the war that raged by notices on the screen of what to do in case of an air raid warning.

No matter what was happening in the outside world, Riverside girls were

being trained assiduously by the all-female staff on how to be good mothers of the future, particularly in Home Science classes.

A past student can clearly remember paying 4d on cooking day for the delight of cooking pink rice (this was before austerity measures when pink was banned), boiling cabbage into a sodden mulch and making exotic desserts like stewed pears. This was consumed by the class who had cooked it, or some unlucky class who turned up next. However, as the girls were taught to arrange tables beautifully as part of their course, perhaps sitting down to those unusual meals was not so unpleasant.

Another part of their course was learning the thoroughly necessary part of keeping a house clean. This was still practised in the flat in the Home Science block (now a staff room with storerooms) but scrubbing and polishing floors was also practised in the Caretaker's Cottage near the present front gate.

Sadly, not all students at Riverside were as active and as healthy as these girls. Two girls at Riverside contracted tuberculosis and one of the girls died at only 19 years of age.

Many students found escape from all the war news and unhappy things in life in the school library, which was not a separate building as it is now, but was in the main block, above the present Principal's office. The present library, obviously a vast improvement in size on the original, spoiled the beauty of the gardens at the front of the school which were always kept in impeccable condition - perhaps this was because no-one ever went there, except on days when very special Assemblies were held at the front of the school.

Although the Married Women's Act was not repealed until 1947, Riverside did have married women employed there during the war years, for example Mrs Grace Eddington from 1943 to 1946.

Many past students remember with pleasure the sandstone landscaped area which contained the beautiful Rose Garden planted in honour of Miss

Smith. They continued to proudly look after it. Another building with pride of place in the school during these years was the arboretum where the girls continued to tend the plants lovingly.

Some Assemblies were still held in the Gymnasium, and there or on the playing fields girls practised the school war cry. There were no Houses or individual war cries then, but eight hundred girls' voices raised in the following words must have stirred many a young Riverside heart at carnivals and sporting events. The following "war cry" is remembered by a former Riversider:

Hoop ra! Hoop ra! Yacka Yacka Yah Hay!
Murrumbidgee Wagga Wagga Yah Yah Yah!
Woe-be-tide, when Riverside
Meets you full of fame
They'll make you run and make you jump
And make you play the game.
Riverside
R - I - V - E - R - S - I - D - E.

Not only was the school spirit fostered at sports carnivals but pride in the British Empire was still celebrated on Empire Day. One particular event at the Showgrounds before the fall of Singapore is remembered vividly. Riverside and many other High Schools in Sydney took part in a large celebration. The Riverside students performed a Wheat Dance. Their frocks and hats were made of green material and at the end of the dance each girl pulled an ingenious cord in the collar of the dress and this released another dress made of gold material which fell and covered the green. The hat was turned inside out, and suddenly! from green to gold we had a symbol of our wheat changing colour, ready for harvest. The girls finished the dance standing in tight groups swaying slightly backwards to represent sheafs of wheat. One of these students has even kept her costume. Its colours are as bright as



The so called "Sacred Lawn"

the memories it provides. Loving care has been lavished on that outfit.

School uniforms were also cared for meticulously. Students who enrolled at Riverside in 1939 can clearly remember being taken to the old Anthony Horderns in George Street to purchase with excitement and pride, the heavy tunic, school tie, navy blazer with the school crest and plain navy felt hat that made up the winter uniform. It was a moment of glory to attach the school band to the hat. To keep the uniform presentable, every weekend it was brushed with cloudy ammonia and then pressed. As there

was clothes rationing, there was an extra incentive to care for the uniform. A school uniform ate into the ration of clothing coupons.

When peace was declared all the girls assembled in the quadrangle where Miss Wicht made the announcement. Everyone was sent off home early to celebrate. The girls had to walk home because there were no special school trams and the ordinary ones were packed with excited people hanging out of the "toast racks". One ex-student remembers going into the city with her friends and dancing in the streets.

The immediate post-war years

When the war finished in 1945, it looked as if a new world was beginning, but shortages and rationing were to hold sway for quite a few years longer. Men who had been away at the war were returning to take up their jobs again, and women, who had played a vital role in filling those jobs during wartime, were being either forced to resign on marriage, or encouraged to give up their jobs to return to hearth and home.

Consequently, during this period of rebuilding the nation, with its emphasis on commerce and home building and shortages of materials, there were no massive changes in educational policy or in buildings. No building program was put into effect during this period at Riverside - building materials were in short supply because of the boom in domestic housing to fulfil the housing needs of all the new families formed when the men returned from the war front.

Even the school uniform remained the same as it had been in the early 1940s, probably partly because of clothing shortages and rationing. The sports uniform in the '40s seems to have consisted of the white blouse, normally worn with the uniform, coupled with a pair of navy Bombay bloomers and a loose tunic over it. A specific sports uniform, as such, does not seem to have been introduced until 1951 when a very smart princess line in grey cesarine came into being.

Holidays, too, were different from today's. The May holidays began on a Thursday, which gave Friday, then a full week away, and school began again on the tuesday of the following week. Such a broken holiday did not provide as much relaxation as the present two weeks off, and probably also tended to

disrupt work for the two weeks on either side of the one week away. August holidays were of two weeks duration.

Changes

There were, however, some changes to the school during those postwar years 1945-50. One major event was the retirement of the Headmistress, Miss Ethel Josephine Wicht on 31 January 1949, but effectively ceasing service at Riverside in December 1948. She is believed to have died of a cerebral haemorrhage late in 1959 or 1960, when she would have been aged about 75.

Miss Tully's first two years 1949-50

Miss Teresa J. Tully took over as Headmistress at Riverside with the new school year in 1949, having been appointed on 14 December 1948. She was 55, a year older than Miss Wicht had been in 1939 when she was appointed. Miss Tully had been trained as a teacher in the years 1913-14, just before the Great War, and commenced teaching at Willoughby on 11 September 1914. She taught mainly in city schools: Fort Street, Chatswood, Lane Cove, Bondi, Mosman, with country service at Cobar and West Wallsend. She remained at Riverside for ten years and retired officially on 26 January 1959.

Miss Tully was a strict Headmistress but she also worked to enlarge the school's horizons, especially in the cultural arena. Miss Tully was herself very interested in ballet and dance, and she encouraged an interest in cultural events. The school choir

seems to have risen to great heights during the late '40s and early '50s under the direction of Mrs Thorn-Clarke, with participation in events as far away as Canberra, and work in combined choirs under the direction of Mr Terence Hunt.



Miss Tully

An Inspector in 1949 waxed lyrical over the choir and wrote in his report that "the School Choir, trained and conducted by Mrs Thorn-Clarke, is doing some splendid work, and making a fine contribution to the school life. It was an inspiration to hear this enthusiastic group of girls singing so well."

The House System

Miss Tully also endeavoured to build up tradition in the school by instituting

the House System to encourage participation by all girls in school activities, such as sport and debates. The inauguration of this House System was decided on at a staff meeting in late 1949. The school population was divided into four Houses. Four contemporary Australian women artists each accepted the role of patroness of a House, and the Houses were named after them. The Patronesses were: Margaret Coen, Isabel Mackenzie, Pixie O'Harris and Mavis Mallinson.

These Patronesses were chosen as they were living in the metropolitan area. This ensured that these women could make personal contact with the members of their Houses by visiting and speaking to the girls on Parents Day. Each of these artists presented an original picture to the school and a letter was sent to the members of the House concerned. These letters were framed and hung in the school corridor beside the original picture by the artist. The four Houses, still in existence today, are:

Coen: named after Margaret Coen (now Mrs Douglas Stewart). She is an artist well known for her flower paintings. She passed on to her House the advice given to her by an artist friend - "Give much application to the fine arts, and much finesse to the applied arts".

Mackenzie: named after Isabel Mackenzie. She passed on to her House the advice - "Originality and honesty in one's work, and courage to keep on trying when things go wrong".

O'Harris: named after Pixie O'Harris, a very well known artist (now Mrs Douglas Pratt). She handed on to her House - "Nothing hurts those who have no fear".

Mallinson: named after Mavis Mallinson, an art teacher. She gave the following advice - "To encourage an appreciation of good art is to develop a love of beauty and harmony in all things".

The House system was implemented towards the end of 1949. During subsequent years in the 1950s, Parents Day would be the occasion when Patronesses would come to the school to speak to the assembled girls.

A uniform parade was held before students marched to the trams and buses in the afternoon. Any students without full school uniform were required to stand at the back where they were counted by the House Captains, and House points were gained or lost according to the number of girls in full school uniform.

Miss Tully instituted the practice of having School Prefects and a Head Girl or Captain and Vice Captain of the school. These were chosen and voted for by the girls, with the tacit approval of the teachers as to the quality of the candidates being an essential factor.

The School Song and Motto

It has proved impossible, so far, to be precise as to when the School Song and Motto were introduced. Both were well established in 1953. Some former students of the '40s cannot remember either, whereas two girls definitely can remember the Song.

It seems likely that it was during Miss Tully's first year that they were introduced. The Motto of *Facta Non Verba* (Deeds not Words) would fit in with her introduction of a House System, School Captain and Vice Captain, and general attitude.

The School Song quotes the Motto, so obviously followed it. The music was composed by Alfred Hill especially for the school. It has been assumed that it was a gift, but one ex-student claims to have heard that £50 was paid for it. Miss Tully was a fine singer herself and very interested in music. It seems reasonable to assume that the School Song came in her time and that she might have had contacts with Alfred Hill. It is not known whether he was also responsible for the rather florid lyrics, but more likely they came from someone at the school,

perhaps even Miss Tully herself.

Facta non verba

Riverside, we stand with thee,
Shouldering thy destiny;
Our every deed, honouring thy creed,
Facta non verba.

Dear School, fount of strength and power,
Emblem of Youth's golden hour.
May our pledge be tribute to thee,
Loyal endeavour.

When fleeting years draw us apart,
Mem'ries enshrined in every heart,
Will guard thy fame,
Cherish thy name,
Sacred for ever.

Riverside, thy bastions rise,
Proudly tow'ring to the skies,
Young voices sound,
Echoes rebound,
Facta non verba.

Young voices sound,
Echoes rebound,
Facta non verba.

Sport, subjects, teachers, school life

Sport and use of the gym had been a consistent feature of life at Riverside since its inception. Physical culture had been listed as a subject in the 1930s and during the '40s it had widened into a range of sports. Sports afternoons on a Friday continued to be held in the grounds of the Mental Hospital, while an annual pilgrimage was made to the other side of the city to either Moore Park or the Showground for a major sports carnival, where the arch rivals were Canterbury Girls, and where the school war cry would be shouted with great enthusiasm.

In a time when the average class size was 46, and when all furniture was screwed down to the floor, allowing little flexibility of movement or rearrangement, sports and sports outings much have come as quite a relief, giving some release of youthful energy,

of selection was very popular and made for a happy relationship with our peers. Usually those elected had held some office throughout First and Second Year as Class Captains and were known to their peers.

Miss Tully retired at the end of 1958. She was succeeded by Miss Dorothy Dey. Miss Dey had served in the country, had been English-History Mistress and Deputy Principal at Fort Street Girls High School. But in a real sense the 50s were Miss Tully's years.

The 1960s

Changes at the top

The decade opened with Miss Dorothy Dey firmly established as Headmistress since 1958. She is remembered as a caring, gracious woman who could be tough when the situation required. Few students were fooled by the shortness of her stature; they knew Miss Dey was in control and appreciated the personal interest she took in many of their pursuits. She left Riverside at the end of 1962 to become Principal of North Sydney Girls until her retirement in 1968.

Miss Dey's successor was Miss Thora Boesen, Riverside's Headmistress from 1963 to 1968. A tall, slim woman, austere in appearance and

dress, she perhaps best fitted the image of the conservative school headmistress - awe-inspiring, at times even terrifying, yet universally respected by students. Old girls have commented on her intelligence, high standards and her dedication to the school. One ex-student described a twinkle in Miss Boesen's eye when she spoke, and heaven help any student whose behaviour caused that twinkle to disappear. The twinkle was part of a sense of humour which was much appreciated by her staff. She also had a way of making a point. One of her teachers says that if you arrived late to class you were likely to find Miss Boesen teaching the class. Nothing would be said - nor was it needed.



Miss Dey at the opening of the Science Block

It is fitting in a school history such as this to quote from Miss Boesen's message to the school in 1967:

In one sense, you know, you can never really say 'I've left school' - I hope that is not bad news. but any spot where we have lived and worked and given of ourselves becomes part of us forever. So in each of us there is a part that is always Riverside.

Miss Boesen began her teaching career in 1932 after completing her university degree. She taught in eight high schools throughout the state before becoming Language Mistress at Newcastle Girls High in 1949, a deputy in 1956, and Principal at Bankstown Girls High in 1959.



Miss Boesen

Miss Boesen took leave in 1969 before retiring at the end of the year. The girls returning to school at the beginning of 1969 were surprised and delighted to hear that Miss Boesen had married Mr Arthur Clayton. Mrs Clayton now lives in England.

Miss Boesen's successor, Miss Mary Robbins, had "on-the-job training" as Deputy Principal at Riverside from

1967. Miss Robbins, who began her teaching career in 1934 at Swansea, remained at Riverside until her retirement at the end of 1972. She brought with her the belief that, along with academic standards, cultural and moral standards were also important to young women.



Miss Robbins

When the decade began, Miss Nina Weir had been Deputy Headmistress for five years. She was, to quote an old girl, "always in complete control". The school was shaken in 1963 to learn of her death while still Deputy Principal. The school paid tribute to Miss Weir with these words:

a wonderful personality, an outstanding teacher and a capable administrator, Miss Weir has left an indelible mark on the life of those with whom she worked.

In a fitting memorial, the school library was named after her and the Nina Weir Memorial Prize was established to reward girls who had been of service to Riverside while attending the school. The award was terminated

after 1971 when the fund ran out. Students who received the award in the 1960s included Merryn Emerson, Bronwyn Hughes, Irene Makris, Margaret Shelley, Diane Feider and Marilyn Torr.

Deputies who followed in Miss Weir's footsteps were: Miss H. Kirkland, 1964-66; Miss M. Robbins, 1967-68; and Miss M. Cunningham in 1969.

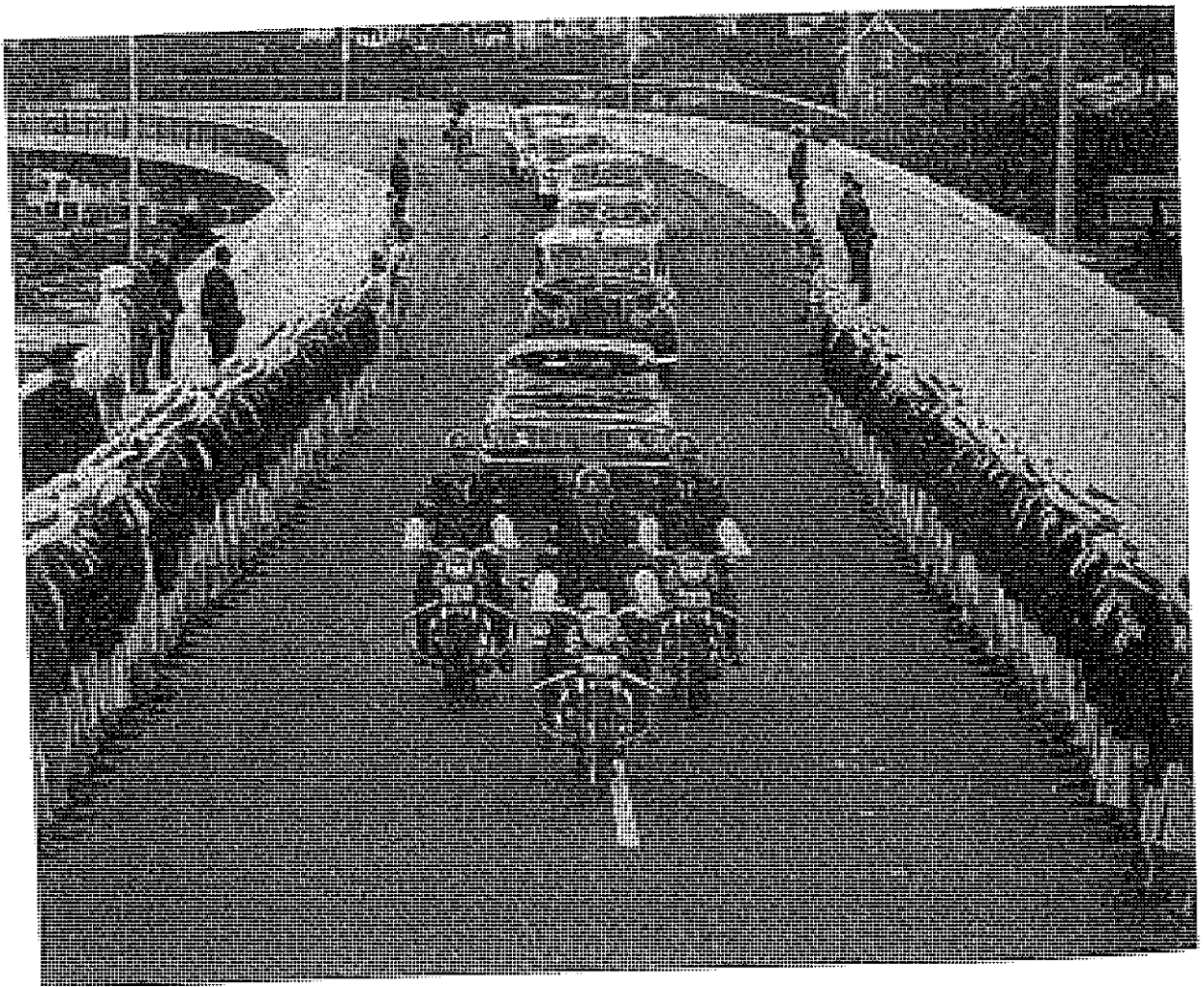
Changes to the school environs

Riverside Girls experienced something of a building boom in the 1960s. On 29 April 1960, Miss Dey welcomed the Premier and Minister for Education, Mr Heffron, to the school to open a new science block

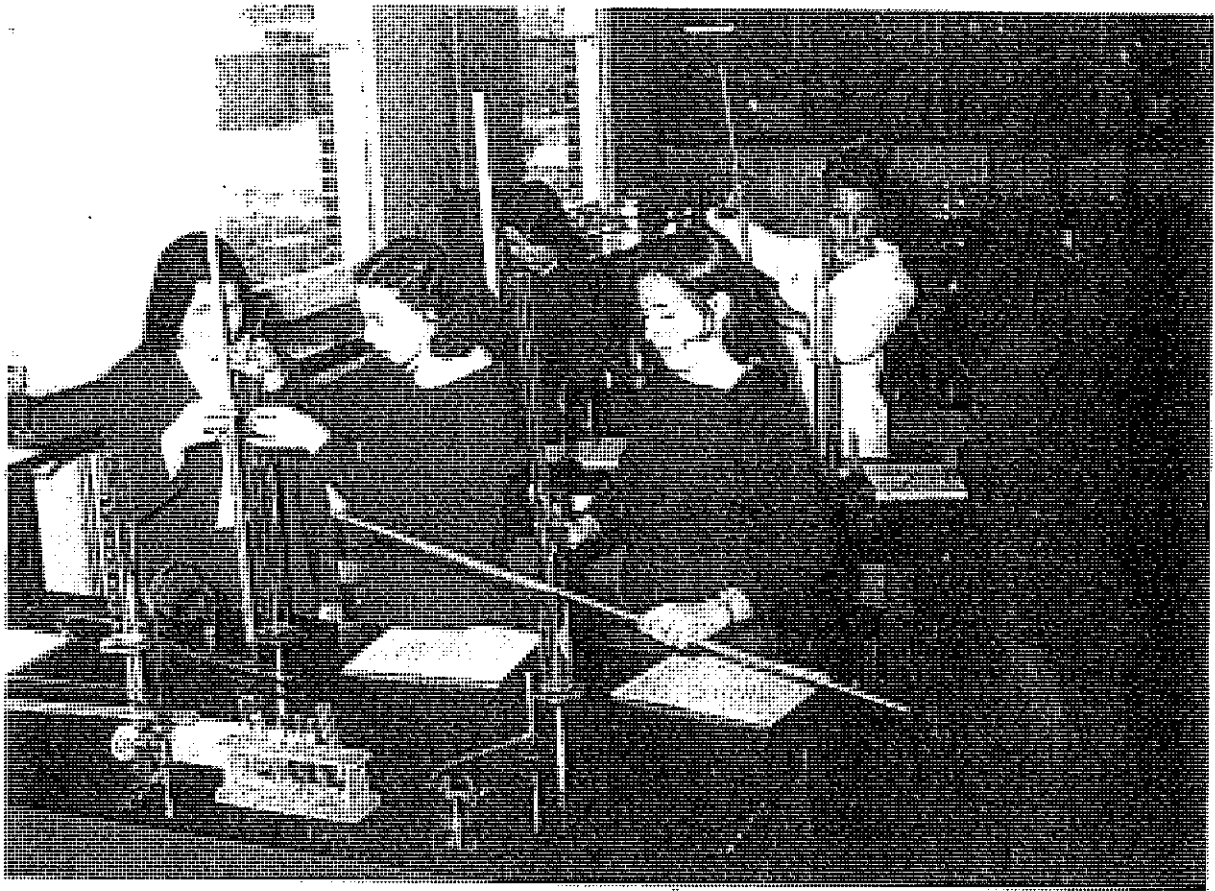
The block, joined to the main

school building, added two science laboratories, a demonstration room (now the school video room) and a preparation room, and new classrooms upstairs. While the building was clear evidence that Riverside was leaving its status as a Home Science school, the students were impressed by Mr Heffron's announcement that an extra day's holiday would be given to Riverside to celebrate the occasion. An additional bonus, no doubt because of the importance of the official guests, was the re-painting of the school's interiors.

Outside the school grounds, the girls saw the gradual rise skywards of the Gladesville Bridge. The arterial road onto the bridge from the Gladesville side cut off a portion of the school's grounds and, as one student noted, gave the additional benefit of



Riverside's Guard of Honour at the opening of the Gladesville Bridge



The opening of the first science block in 1960 and the Inwood wing in 1965 allowed girls to experiment!

decreasing the number of visitors who wandered into the school from the Gladesville Hospital.

Riverside played an important role in the opening of the bridge in 1964. Great excitement was engendered by the fact that the opening was to be a royal occasion; the Duchess of Kent, Princess Marina, was to declare the bridge open. Senior girls from Riverside formed a Guard of Honour through which Her Highness, accompanied by the Premier, walked. Four students - Pam Fairbairn, Alma Florenz, Janice Anderson and Judy Wickham - were lucky enough to speak to Princess Marina. After the opening, the 2,000 official guests had refreshments in a marquee in the school grounds.

But for some Riverside girls it was with a touch of sadness that the old bridge across the Parramatta River was closed. The old bridge's inability to cope with peak hour traffic had been a boon for some girls. Delays

were so frequent that some girls had incorporated the time into their daily routine - using the time for completing homework and arriving late with a watertight excuse. Now they had to do their homework in their time and arrive in time for period one!

The Gladesville Bridge also affected the school's whole orientation. Eventually the entrance up to the front of the school was abandoned and today's entrance is through what was previously the back of the school. (Some of today's students would be surprised to know that behind the wall outside the Principal's office, are the doors and grand portico through which visitors entered the main building).

The opening ceremonies continued in 1965. Friday 13 August saw the Deputy Minister for Education, Mr W. Fife, open the Inwood Wing (named after Miss Irene (Rene) Inwood, Staff Inspector of Schools, who had a close association with Riverside and was a

regular guest at School Speech Days). This building, with its internal courtyard garden, provided the school with four new laboratories, as well as art rooms and new classrooms.

The internal courtyard, originally just a cement depression, was turned into a rock garden of large river stones, with ferns and umbrella trees by Miss Robbins when she became Principal.

At the same time, the new school Library was opened - a valuable addition to the school. Up till this time the Library had been located in the top corridor of the main building. Between 1965 and 1968, as many new books were added to the Library as had been added in the previous twenty five years. Still, by 1969, Miss Nesbitt, the Librarian, was already aware of the Library's inadequacies and expressed the hope that the school would not have to wait another thirty years for improvements. (Only time

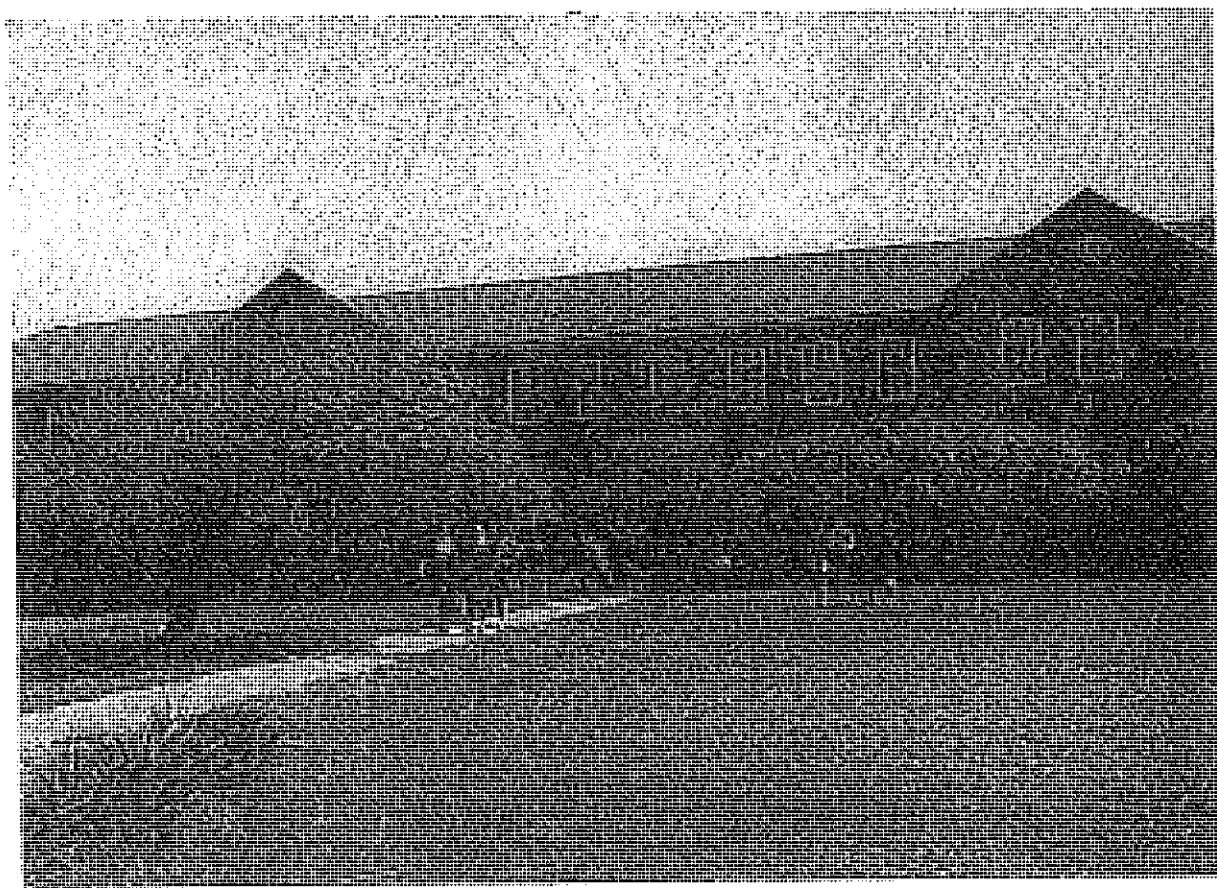
will tell, but it is almost twenty years since the Library was opened.)

During the '60s the present school oval was laid as a hockey field, which required the moving of the incinerator to its present site.

Riverside had surely grown in the 1960s and Miss Robbins was able to end the decade with the announcement that a school hall would be built. During the '60s, assemblies were held in the quadrangle or in the very cramped gymnasium. Important occasions, such as School Speech Days, were held outside the school.

Changes in staff

In 1960, Riverside was staffed by forty five teachers. The staff increased to the mid-'50s by 1965 and remained at this number for the remainder of the decade. By today's standards, the annual staff turnover was high indeed;

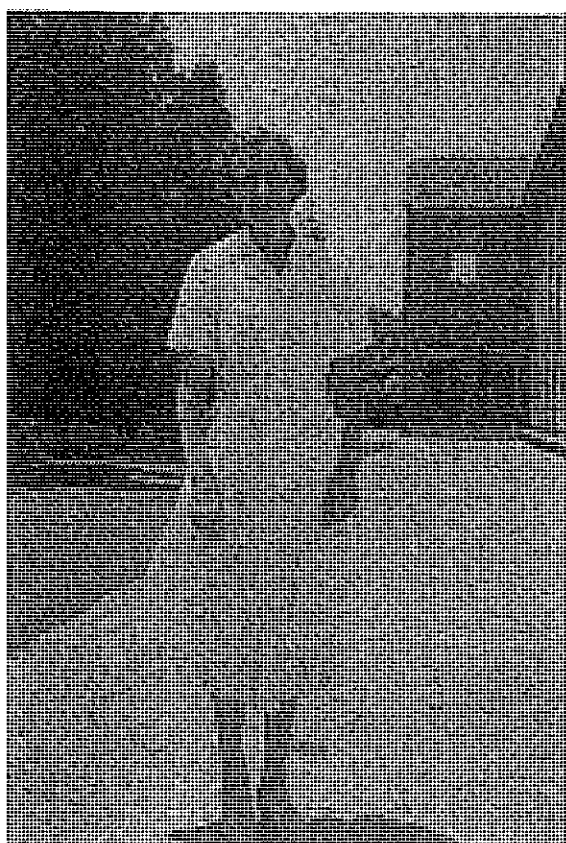


Students on the front lawn

with between a third and a quarter of staff leaving each year. In 1969, for example, there were twenty departures and nineteen new arrivals.

With so many teachers contributing to the education of girls who attended Riverside in the 1960s it would be impossible to refer to them all. Complete staff lists and photos are contained in editions of *Alcheringa* which are held in the school if any ex-student wishes to jog her memory. To help them, here are but a few names.

The award for survival was shared by Miss Bernice Lumb and Mrs A. Brun Hoffman, both on the Home Science



Miss Lumb

staff, who were the only teachers to last the entire decade. Old girls may also remember Mrs B. Tranter, the clerical assistant, who also served the whole decade in a rather cramped office in the lower corridor (now the rather cramped English Book Room).

The 1960s also produced some real 'stayers'. In 1967 Claire Fitzmaurice

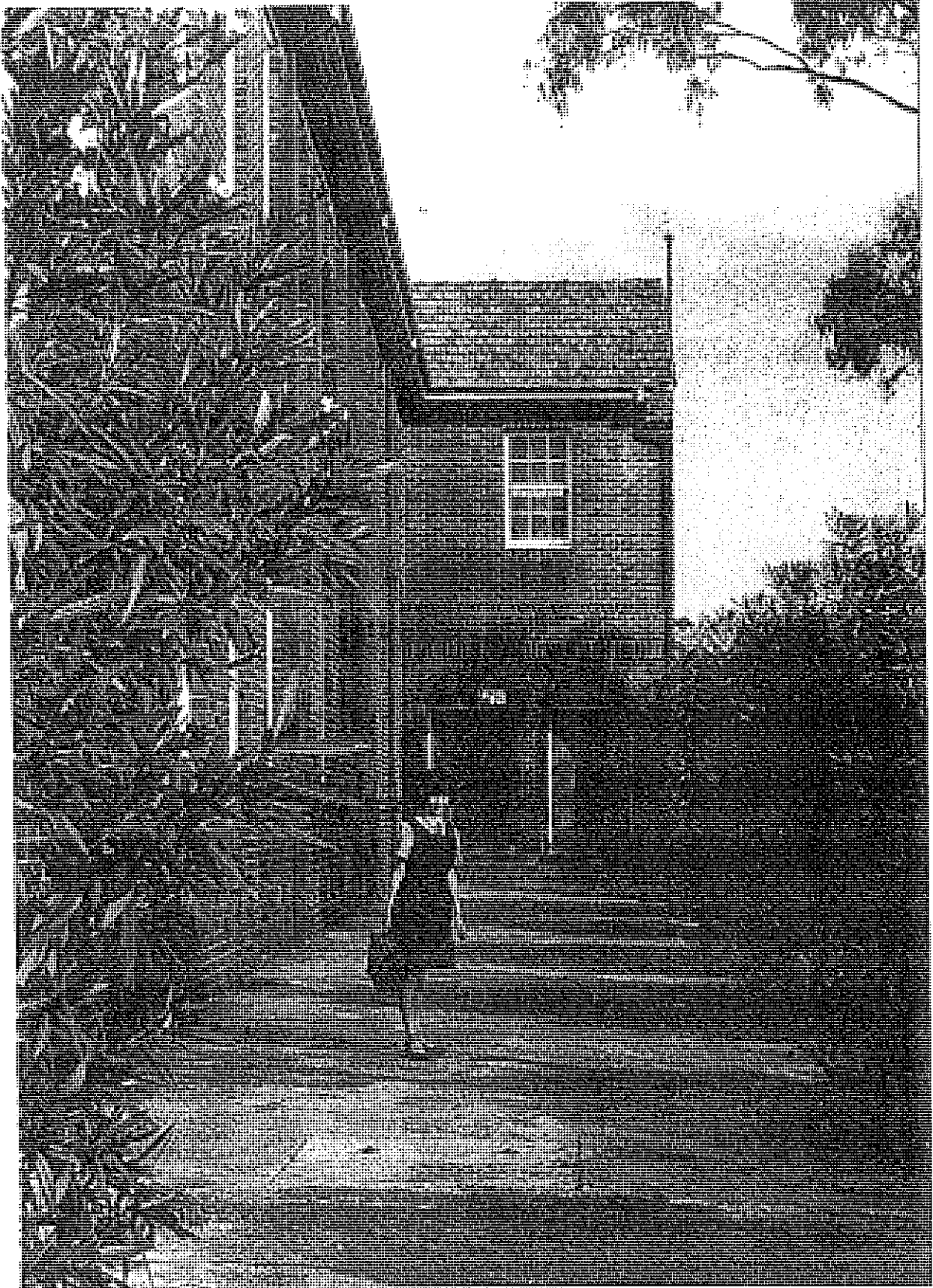
joined the Science staff. Mrs Fitzmaurice made her final exit from Riverside only this year after seventeen years. In 1968, a new Mathematics Master, Mr Cyril Fowler, joined the staff. He was to become a much loved grandfatherly figure to the girls until his retirement at the end of 1979. One ex-student remembers following Mr Fowler around the school because of the delicious smell of the caramel pipe tobacco he smoked.

It seems teachers are remembered for all sorts of reasons, not necessarily for their efforts to broaden the horizons of young minds. Mrs Lodens was a language teacher from 1960-64; a tall elegant woman who wore tight-fitting skirts and amazed the girls with her dexterity when manoeuvring herself into a three-wheeled continental car.

Mistresses with special charge of girls always occupy a place in the minds of students, and Mrs Sefton, Special Mistress until 1964, was no exception. She terrified girls who wore beehive hair-do's, when they were the rage, and would spot recalcitrant girls at assembly and order them to comb the offending hive out. Spot checks for conformity to uniform standards were also a speciality. Miss Lois Ferguson ably assumed the responsibility upon Mrs Sefton's departure.

Males also continued to infiltrate the female sanctum at Riverside on the Art staff. In 1963, Mr William Baxter arrived as an Art teacher. Known as Artie Bill, he was like a breath of fresh air to his admirers, while other girls felt he had too much of an air of self-importance. By 1969, the male ranks had swollen to six.

Other girls remember the language teacher who would overcome problems with her accent by writing spelling words on the board during a spelling test. Many remember Mrs Hoffman's thunderous voice, or Mrs Bruce's violin recitals to an unappreciative audience. One thing stands out - teachers always make an impression: the motherly, the vague, the fearsome, the chalk-throwers, the gentle, the inspirers. Talking to ex-students, the general



Entrance to the Lower Block - note the oleanders planted by Miss Nielsen

feeling was a sense of dedication, often only appreciated with hindsight.

Uniform update

The school uniform, and whether it should or should not be worn, was not an issue at Riverside in the 1960s. While outside the school the mini-skirt made its debut in the mid-'60s (and continued to creep further away from the knee as the decade continued), our girls remained loyal, even if unwillingly, to school uniform. The box pleat remained unchallenged as the winter uniform but it gave way in 1961 to a new summer uniform: a light blue and white check shift, buttoned from the waist up to an open collar.

The following year a new sports uniform was introduced. The grey tunic was replaced by a white cotton shirt with royal blue trim and a gold girdle.

With the changes to the education system in 1965, the new Fifth and Sixth Forms were given a uniform that clearly set them apart from the junior school and inflicted another defeat on the box pleat. In a valiant attempt to introduce some notion of fashion into the school environment, the senior uniform comprised a teal blue skirt and collarless jacket, with a white blouse, the collar of which was turned down over the jacket. A matching beret completed the uniform.

At the beginning of the decade the school had Gate Prefects who checked that all girls entering the school grounds were wearing the correct uniform, including grey panama hats with the school head-band. One student recalled that as a Gate Prefect she never hesitated to take the names of offending students, who would have to stay that afternoon and serve a detention for their sins.

By the end of the decade, while students were still expected to arrive in basic school uniform, the insistence on full school uniform was less rigidly enforced. School berets were more likely than not to be found crushed in the bottom of school bags and pulled out when the occasion demanded.

Changes to education

The '60s saw a complete overhaul of the New South Wales education system. The Wyndham Scheme of 1963 brought changes to the schools in the following years. Students were to complete a sixth year of high school rather than five. The Intermediate and Leaving Certificates were replaced by the School Certificate, awarded at the end of Fourth Form, and the Higher School Certificate at the end of Sixth Form.

In 1963, Mrs G. Fogarty, member of the English staff and editor of the school magazine, described the Wyndham Report as a light "glimmering in the darkness". She had joined the staff of Riverside in 1963 and was struck by the lack of change in the education the girls were receiving since she had last taught in 1938. She described the situation:

A static acceptance of facts by the pupils; a dearth of modern textbooks and mechanical aids, and the pressures of increased classroom loads act as an alarming barrier to teaching ... The Wyndham Report will persuade many pupils to remain at school the additional year that bridges the gap between childhood and youth, and so will enable them to equip themselves better for the demands of a technical age. This fourth year, too, will free many pupils from the pressures of a pre-university Leaving Certificate.

In 1965, eighty-one Riverside Girls passed the School Certificate examination and in 1967 thirty girls sat for the Higher School Certificate, with Catherine Jones being dux of the school.

While the girls' stay at Riverside had been extended, the range of subjects offered changed very little. Indeed many of the same subjects are offered today, with the exceptions of Latin, Social Studies and Typing. The school placed considerable emphasis on academic achievement, classes were streamed and academic prizes awarded at annual Speech Days. Despite this, the girls were still referred to as the



Home Science remained a force in the 1960s

"secretaries, nurses and home-makers" of the future.

One impressive feature of Riverside was the number of clubs that operated in the school. Girls could become involved in Debating, the Red Cross, Dance Club, Drama Club, Gym Club, Gardening Club, the School Choir, School Orchestra, ISCF, School Magazine Committee, and the Recorder Club. Through these clubs the students not only gained rewarding personal experiences but brought credit to the school in the community.

Musically, the school earned itself an enviable reputation. The School Choir and Choral Group attended the Annual Combined Secondary Schools Choral Concert each year and on three occasions was chosen to sing at the official opening of Education Week. In 1963 the Senior Choir was asked to sing at an Interdenominational Service in St Andrews Cathedral. This was followed in 1965 when overseas participants in a UNESCO Seminar on

Music visited the school to hear the Riverside Choir.

Such cultural achievements were matched by sporting achievements. The House system remained strong throughout the 1960s and swimming and athletics carnivals were keenly contested. The Athletics Carnivals, held in the grounds of the Gladesville Hospital, always began with a march-past of each House team and reflected a real sense of house spirit.

In swimming, in particular, Riverside excelled. Between 1962 and 1969 Riverside was the dominant school at the Zone Swimming Championships and went on to further successes at the State Companionships in 1963, 1964, 1967 and 1968. Riverside was to send its own representative, Karen Moras of Third Form, to the 1968 Olympics in Mexico.

School sport saw the introduction of many new activities providing greater choice for students. Water ballet, ten-pin bowling, skating and



Gym Classes

trampolining were all introduced during the 1960s.

Away from the sport field, Riverside continued to serve the community through its commitment to Red Cross. The girls made annual donations and participated in mannequin parades held at the Sydney Town Hall where they modelled their own creations.

Contacts with Drummoyne Boys High School were more frequent than today. The two schools worked together to produce several theatrical performances during the decade.

Debating teams brought further credit to the school by participating in inter-school competitions, while within the school, Inter-House debating competitions were held.

The efforts of the students were supported by the activities of the Ladies Auxiliary (sometimes known as the Mothers Club). Under the leadership of Mrs Pfueller (1960-61), Mrs Redford (1963-65) and Mrs Lockyer (1966-68), the Auxiliary boosted the school's coffers and provided an

enormous list of equipment ranging from heaters to a Mathematics typewriter.

In 1960 the School Fete and Open Day were combined and again the Ladies Auxiliary was at the fore, organising and providing goods for sale.

In 1969 the P & C Association was re-formed. It had apparently been in recess for some years.

Despite Riverside's achievements in the classroom, on the sporting field and in the community, and the efforts of parents working behind the scenes to improve the school, Riverside's reputation in the local area suffered as the decade progressed. Perceptions of a school are important, and whether they are falsely conceived or accurate, they stay with a school.

In one particular case, in 1969, a mother of a potential student decided that Riverside's tone was not suitable for her child. Allegations about the moral standards of the school were made and the story was taken up by the Sydney media. The staff and

students had to mobilise and begin the fight to save the school reputation. Jean Dymond, School Captain in 1969, left the school with this message:

A year which has seen Riverside's reputation damaged - with her name

smeared. It will take every girl's efforts to be a good member and representative of Riverside to convince the public of the falsity of this.

That challenge was met in the 1970s.

The "Emery Era" 1973 — to date

At the end of 1972 Miss Robbins retired and Miss Mary Emery was appointed Principal from 1973. She had been Deputy Principal at Liverpool Girls High where there were over 1100 girls. To come to Riverside with its



Mary Emery

700 plus, she commented, seemed like moving from Hong Kong to Bega. However, she appreciated the few numbers and the greater opportunity to really know the girls and staff.

Riverside loses Balmain and Rozelle

These numbers were to drop even more dramatically in one year. Balmain High School opened in 1974 contracting

Riverside's drawing area to the northern side of the Iron Cove Bridge. Riverside became a school fluctuating between 620 and 640 for the next few years. For a year, however, while Balmain High's buildings were completed Riverside "boarded" the Balmain girls.

The sudden loss of numbers at a time when numbers elsewhere were not obviously declining forced the Principal and her Executive to consider how to respond positively to this situation: how to minimise any disadvantage to the students and capitalise on advantages.

Pupil numbers determined staffing and funding so disadvantages were not hard to find. A major problem was how to provide the greatest possible choice of subjects. After trying three electives, then interest electives, the best solution seemed to be a module system.

In this system, the first two years do not specialise and electives are not taken until the following two years (currently Years 9 and 10). This delays choice and gives the girls at least a taste of a wide variety of subjects. This module system has continued, with modifications, to the present.

Characteristics of the Emery era

This active response to change is a characteristic of the "Emery Era". It is a part of three distinctive features of the period: a distinctive leadership style and personality; the initiation of change at the school level as authority and opportunity devolved to the school; and an active response to change in central policies. All these have been and are closely interrelated.

Miss Emery's particular style of dealing with both students and staff involves allying her sense of humour with a genuine concern for the welfare of and interest in the individual. Her "open door" policy is an aspect of a democratising of decision-making processes. At staff level this has been reflected in the "housing" of subject heads with their staff in staffrooms rather than together in one room and in "extended" executive meetings where all subjects and learning areas of the school are represented.

While not averse to some good table pounding at times with students, nevertheless Miss Emery always tries to sit down and discuss matters in order to resolve problems. She is notable for her sympathetic understanding of individual students. The girls report that they know where they stand with Miss Emery and accept they will be dealt with as appropriate. No grudges are held.

Pupil welfare and development

It was because of Miss Emery's commitment to the welfare of the girls that she initiated a Pupil Welfare Department in 1976 under the direction of the first Mistress-in-Charge of Girls, Miss Sue Prell. Such an executive position was created in schools with at least 500 girls, but the role of the MIG (as they are familiarly called) was and is stated somewhat vaguely.

Miss Emery wanted the specific "agents" of pupil welfare, the Form (now Year) Mistresses/Masters, the School Counsellor, the Careers Teacher, the English as a Second Language teacher (and when appointed later, the Remedial/Resource teacher) to be directed and work as a unit.

Under Miss Prell's direction this group meets once a week to discuss the welfare of individual students, to devise positive programs for a group or year and to evaluate their own roles and work. Minutes of these meetings are issued to the staff to keep them informed.

The Year 8 Community Work when

they clean up an area, the Year 10 Seminar for the Disabled organised by a Year 10 committee, the Year 9 social day and discussion groups with Drummoyne Boys High, are examples of programs devised and organised by the Pupil Welfare group.

The personal development course, called Living Skills (two compulsory periods for each class from Year 7 to Year 10) is another area of Pupil Welfare. It deals with growth, growing up and everyday life skills.

Riverside has been fortunate in having Miss Prell as their MIG. An outstandingly dedicated and caring teacher, she is renowned for knowing the name of every girl in this school, and usually their parents and their backgrounds - and for being always on the go. She is the best candidate for a paging "bleeper" the staff know. She features strongly in the memories of past students from 1976, as well as in the Guinness Book of Records as having scored two consecutive holes in one at golf!

So, one of the strengths of Riverside during this period is its concern for pupil welfare. This specific group creates a focus for the concern shared across the school. The importance of the Pupil Welfare group is indicated in one way by the supply of teachers wishing to be Form Mistresses or Masters, even though since 1975 they have been given no monetary allowance for the position. With the increasing tendency for the school to be involved, willingly or not, in social and family problems, this pupil welfare group has become even more important.

Miss Emery has a strong belief in female education as a part of the education of people as a whole. However, sometimes affirmative action has to be taken to show girls they "can do anything". Hence her strong support for woodwork classes, for careers education which emphasises decision-making skills, for link courses with TAFE, for the introduction of Technical Drawing as an elective, Furniture Making as an Other Approved Study; for Science teaching initiatives as well



Year 8 clean up Rodd Point

encouraging, where possible, girls to do Physics, Chemistry and the higher Mathematics.

Student revues and ceremonies

Some letters from ex-students seem to suggest that a vivid memory is their final day at school.

The final days were marked by large quantities of tears, as girls realised that the time had come for them to leave the protected environment of Riverside and face the challenges and problems of the outside world:

I left home that December morning in 1973, feeling terrific, the very thought of finishing school for good, was more than just a dream. This was to be the day I had longed for.

The chatter at my bus stop in Balmain was on events of the past four years. We

talked of teachers we liked or disliked, and of the silly fools who were going on to 6th form ...

For some reason, by lunchtime, our happiness had turned to sorrow as we realised that we were leaving the place that had been our second home, leaving our friends, knowing that we may not meet again and, the teachers, the people who had guided and taught us.

My classmates and I sat in the quadrangle and wondered what the future would be like once we left our Riverside family. We all cried!

What should have been a joyful time turned into almost a wake. We cuddled each other and wept. Our Headmistresses stood on the stage in the gym, and gave us a speech on what to expect in the outside world, she wished us all the good things in life with a Coke toast, then it was over. Four years of our lives spent at Riverside had ended.

With the advent of Miss Emery, the final day of all Sixth Form (now Year 12) school leavers became less of a mopping-up operation, and more of a gala festival and a highlight in the school year.

Miss Emery had thought that the Sixth Form should finish their schooling with laughter as well as sadness. They were encouraged, even urged, to put on a revue on their second last day as a constructive alternative to a "muck-up". It took some persuading, but finally a Sixth Form produced a revue and established a tradition.

The "Clapping-Out" ceremony Miss Emery had devised from 1973 had proved very successful. All the Sixth Form students sat together in the Hall, and each of their teachers delivered valedictory remarks, in a more or less light tone - some with good advice and better wishes for the successful future of the leavers. A representative from each year also wished them well. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the school clapped while the Sixth Formers filed up onto the stage past their teachers, with many damp kisses and hand shakes.

As the Revue allowed the girls to "get their own back" on the staff, for six years of "suffering", slowly the staff began to realise, with prompting from Miss Emery, that they were missing a golden opportunity of evening the score. Each faculty now presents a Cecil B. de Mille production - on a grand scale - with a chorus line medley of parodies from Social Science and Mathematics staff combined, to the Charlie awards from the Science staff (named after a former member of the Science staff, Mr Charlie Willcox) to full-scale dramatic productions ("Macbeth", "The Girl from Riverside" ...) by the English-History staff, and sometimes shorter numbers by smaller staff groups, such as Languages or Art. The whole production takes about two hours, and the "clapping-out" follows it. There is also a formal luncheon attended by Years 11 and 12 and staff, at which Auld Lang Syne is sung and the school is toasted.

The new-style farewell has cer-

tainly absorbed some of the tears of past years and gives the school-leavers a memorable end to their school career. It is eagerly awaited by the girls.

For the past few years, Year 10 have also produced a Revue (generally on a theme, so that it does not rival the Year 12 revue). This gives the younger girls an opportunity to farewell those members of their Year who have decided not to return to school for the two senior years. So it is no longer just a speech and toast from the gym stage.

The School Student Council

With the founding of a School Student Council and the broadening of its electoral basis to include student representatives from each year, the girls have been given practical lessons in democracy and its workings, even though successive years of senior students have voted to continue the offices of School Captain, Vice-Captain and Prefects, the last also being the Year 12 delegates to the School Council. Some seventeen-year-olds, even in the 1980s, are still traditionalists it seems.

Charities

The school has upheld the tradition of caring for those less fortunate than ourselves, and over the years has raised vast sums of money for such social agencies as the Red Cross. For many years the school supported the Eleanor McKinnon Boys Home by providing the money for such things as a grandfather clock, blankets, clothing for the boys and lino for the kitchen floor. This was continuing the policy of Miss Robbins, who instigated Riverside's policy of supporting Red Cross. In 1975, largely due to the suggestion of Miss Emery, the school 'changed' its Red Cross support to the Glen Mervyn Children's Home (for both girls and boys in need of temporary shelter), for whom, over the years the school has



Year 8 Medieval History Day 1982

provided a colour TV set, twenty bedside lockers, a gas barbecue (and its installation), and a considerable amount of clothing. The Student Council has raised this money in a variety of ways.

In 1981, the School Council decided to support the Foster Child Plan of World Vision and has continued this support ever since. In addition, the girls have raised money for Community Aid Abroad, the Walk Against Want, National Parks and Wildlife Association, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, the Spastic Centre, the Multiple Sclerosis Readathon, sponsoring an animal in Taronga Zoo and, of course, Stewart House at Curl Curl for underprivileged students at NSW state schools - quite an impressive list - in addition to raising money for our own school purposes.

Uniforms

As part of a desire to allow the girls greater flexibility and practicality,

Miss Emery suggested a change to the winter Junior uniform. The navy serge box-pleated tunic had become quite expensive, was difficult to make and hard to keep clean and smart.

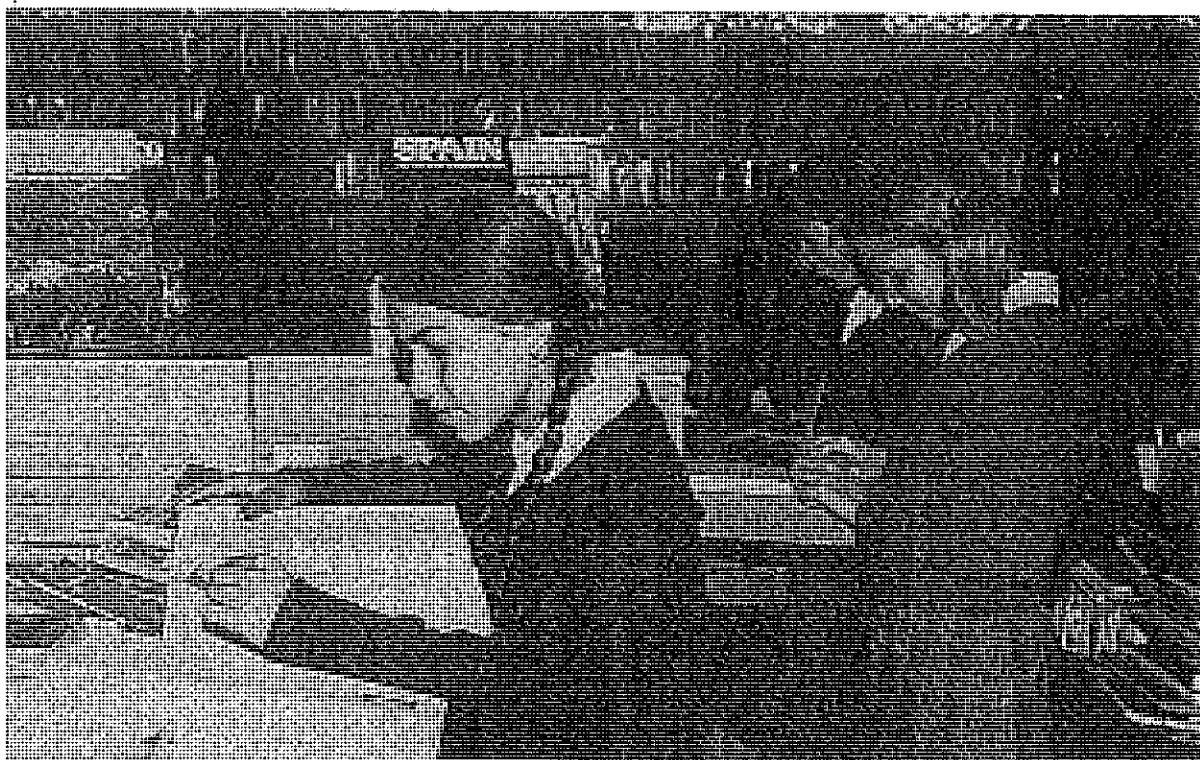
In consultation with the P & C and the girls, the current A-line tunic with a tartan incorporating the school colours was chosen. A white blouse or skivvy was to be worn with light navy jumper or reverse-less blazer. A junior navy cloth "hostess" hat was also instituted. This uniform was introduced from May of 1974.

Since then successive changes have included navy slacks as an alternative uniform in winter (originally only the seniors wore them), navy or black stockings as well as brown nylon, and this year a navy "sloppy-joe" with the school badge printed on it has been brought in.

Along the way, the hat was dispensed with as a compulsory item and the Seniors were allowed to wear JC sandals in summer. The only change to the Junior summer uniform was to introduce an alternative style by



Rowing group showing the new junior uniform



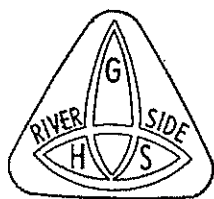
The Library

removing the action-back and the belt across the back waist from the dress.

But the greater flexibility offered has been seized on by many students to become a licence for almost "anything goes" at times. In particular the Principal and staff are waging a battle against the wearing of sneakers and sandshoes, often grubby and torn. They are finding it hard to convince students that they are not healthy for feet, especially growing ones worn long term, and look odd with a school uniform.

Sports uniforms have also changed, usually in line with competitive sport practices. So, presently, the basic sports uniform is of yellow T-shirt worn with blue sports pants and a sports skirt over, or blue shorts. Tracksuits are permitted as well.

The school badge, designed in 1934, had been incorporated into a rather ugly shield shape. In 1973, the badge was changed to the more modern triangular style.



Changes in the school population

One feature of Riverside that had been becoming more obvious since the late 1960s was the greater ethnicity of the school population.

In July 1978, a survey of the school population was carried out by the staff. Questionnaires were filled in and the results tabulated. Then, 87.6% of the girls were born in Australia, New Zealand or the United Kingdom (81.0% in Australia) but 35% of parents were of non-English speaking origin. These percentages have not changed significantly in the '80s. The girls of ethnic backgrounds are not new arrivals so any language problem for them is not a basic one but more one of higher order language proficiency, especially for those girls who speak another language at home or whose parents may speak English at home but as a second language. In 1978, 19% of the girls' mothers and 6.6% fathers did not speak English very well.

These changes to the pupil population have led to the appointment of a part-time English as a Second



Year 7 - Aboriginal and Multicultural Studies

Language teacher (ESL) and attempts to support all girls no matter where their place of origin in special programs including language, Year 7 Social Studies, in Living Skills, Careers work, and in encouraging the appreciation of and tolerance for different cultures generally.

Another interesting result from this survey was that 29% of mothers born in Australia attended Riverside themselves. This high percentage is still reflected in the number of special requests each year for placement of their daughters at Riverside by ex-students.

Staff development

One of the features of Miss Emery's leadership has been the professional development of her staff. Miss Emery is a vital part of this process. Her attitude is described as being always "optimistic rather than cautious approval", one of "let's give it a go" -

though tempered with realism. She refers to herself, rather ironically, as a "great facilitator". Teachers were and are actively encouraged to be at the forefront of change to education, and especially for girls in NSW. Numbers of staff over the years have become, or have been allowed to be innovative, creative and involved in devising new teaching methods or modifying or developing old ones; in developing new courses not just at the school but across the state.

Many staff are active on syllabus committees, Regional committees including Inservice, and have developed and led in-service courses. Staff have also been involved in school-initiated inter-school visits and exchanges. Among the Social Sciences staff, for example, is an ex-regional consultant and an ex-state consultant. Staff have also moved on to posts in Head Office in the Directorate of Studies and in Special Programs. Many of its programs are sought after by other schools and, indeed, have been



Above: Staff Sports group

Below: Miss Dewsbury

impossible in the fairly static atmosphere of the classroom. Each class had its own room where the teacher came, except for specific areas like Art, PE or Library. The length of the period was forty minutes and the school day was from about 8.50 am to 3.20 pm.

During Miss Wicht's time, and after with Miss Tully, an assembly continued to be held every morning in the quad, and teachers collected their students from there and marched them into class. The periods were marked, not with a siren as today, but with a heavy hand bell, which would be rung by some privileged student.

Teachers from this period 1945-50 included the following: Miss Jansen, a very pretty PE teacher, Miss Harper (Home Science), Miss Jeremy, Miss Churchwood (Home Science) who was very strict, Miss Delaney (History) who was new Deputy Headmistress in 1948 and later became Mrs McLelland, Miss Dewsbury (Maths and Deputy Headmistress 1949-51), Miss Morrison (PE), Miss McGee (Physiology), Miss Washington (Art), Miss Wiley (Library), Miss



Healey, Miss Betty Olive (PE) who was a very pleasant young teacher known to all as "BO", and Miss Paterson. One Domestic Science teacher was reputed to throw saucepans at girls who really annoyed her!!

Discipline was maintained by various means and the girls were strictly controlled. Talking in class could mean detention. This usually involved staying back after school in the detention room - now the clerk's office - or, horror of horrors, being sent to stand outside the Headmistress' office.

The administration of the school meant a heavy work load for the Headmistress and her Deputy, as there were no clerks to help out. In fact, the Deputy Headmistress needed to have a classroom close to the Headmistress' office so that she could answer the phone while she taught her class.

Reports were issued twice a year, with end of year examinations a sword of Damocles hanging over students. The Intermediate Certificate was still the culmination of school life at Riverside, and it provided an entry into office (clerical) work and nursing. Students who wanted to complete their secondary education to matriculation were still forced to break the continuity of their school life and enrol elsewhere, usually at Burwood Girls. Riverside was still seen as essentially a school training girls for their later lives as wives and mothers.

Society in the 1940s, particularly in the period 1945-50 when women were being edged out of the workforce in favour of returning servicemen, still saw an overwhelming commitment in women's lives towards the domestic roles of wife and mother, and working mothers tended to be looked at askance.

In the Biennial Inspection of the school in 1950, it was noted that approximately 50% of the students were taking Home Science as opposed to the Commercial Course. Parents often opted for the Commercial Course in order to fit their daughters with an office job. The Inspectors commended the general tone and attitude of the school:

The attention to the needs of girls as girls, the fostering of womanly ideals, and the requirement that pupils pursue the courses in needlework and hygiene, ensure that the school loses none of its Home Science character.

The school also had special classes for the slower students. These were in operation in the First and Second Years. Emphasis was placed on reading, good manners, the right attitude and self control in order to provide these students with an approach to life after school. Overall, the school was praised for its good standards of testing and results.

The trams are removed

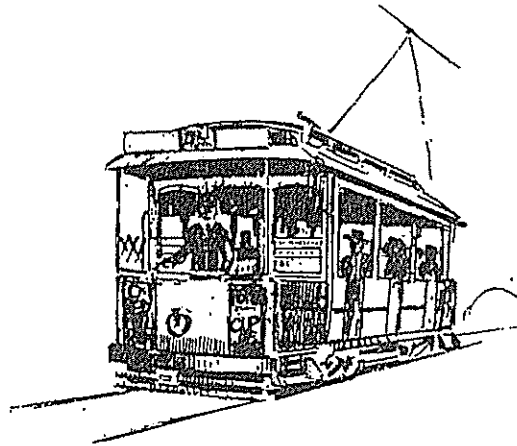
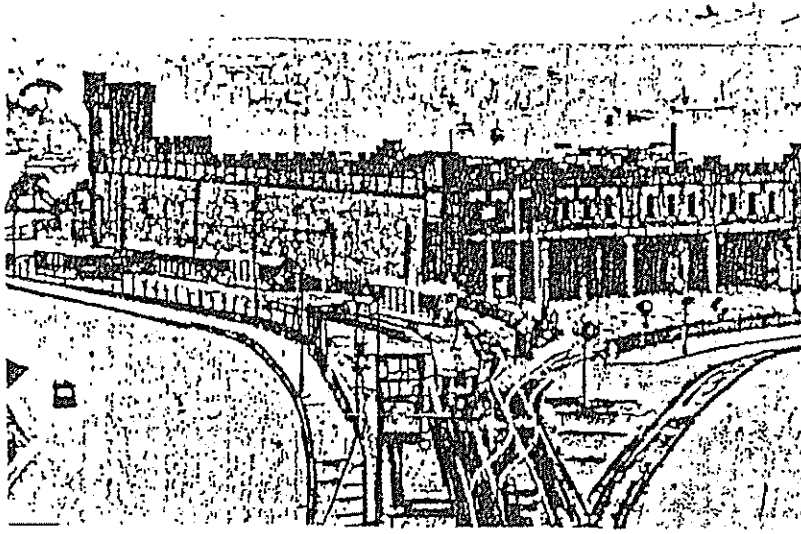
A major change also took place in the transport arrangements for the school in 1949-50. Girls came from quite a wide area to attend the school and the trams across the old Gladesville Bridge and from Ryde/Gladesville regularly carried large numbers of girls to school. Very few girls were lucky enough to have a bike to ride to school and the majority of girls, including the few walkers, regularly continued to go through the tram ritual every afternoon. Woe betide the walker who tried to sneak off from the march to the trams; she would be expected to wait along with the others. Some girls needed to travel by both tram and bus to reach their homes. A transport concession pass was supplied to students.

Towards the end of the '40s, however, a major reappraisal was being made of the tram as urban transport, and the effect of this was the removal of the stalwart tram from traffic routes, and the removal of tram lines. On 18 December 1949, the tram line between Gladesville Bridge and Ryde was closed and buses replaced it. In January 1950, the line was closed between Drummoyne and Gladesville Bridge, but this was seen to be premature and it was re-opened again from Gladesville Bridge to Drummoyne from 28 May 1950, only to be closed again on 20 July 1951 between Lyons

Road and Gladesville Bridge.

The links with the old tramway system were severed completely when the line between the Fort Macquarie Tramway shed (now the Opera House) and Drummoyne was closed completely

on 27 June 1953. Henceforth, students of Riverside, whether travelling by the old Gladesville Bridge, or after 1966 the new Gladesville Bridge, or to and from Ryde, would do so by bus.



The 1950s

Many significant events happened in the history of Riverside during the 1950s. Perhaps one of the most significant being the change in school name from Riverside Central Domestic Science School to Riverside Girls High School. This, of course, reflected the fact that as from 1955 students could progress beyond Third Year to the Leaving Certificate. The importance of the event was also reflected in a new school badge and a change in school uniform.

More of Miss Tully

While these events might be important to the history of the school, the person who seemed to be most synonymous with the 1950s was the Headmistress, Miss Tully. Ex-students remember her with awe and admiration. Their reminiscences of Miss Tully certainly create the picture of a person who set the example of behaviour and grooming and expected every girl to follow this example. How better to describe Miss Tully than to quote from the ex-students' letters:

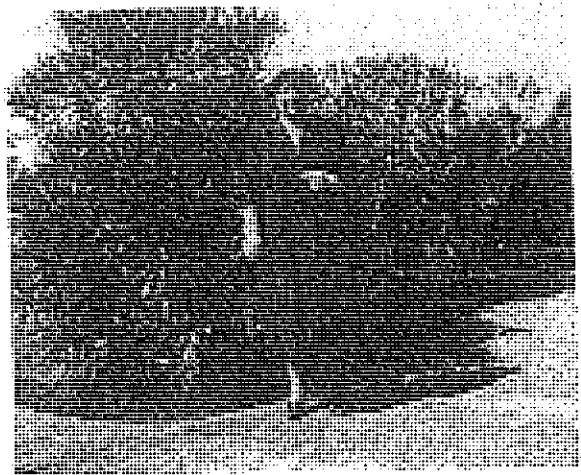
I find it very hard, 30 years later, to wave and acknowledge a friend. Miss Tully would reprimand any girl who did, as she considered it most unlady like to wave.

We were part of the 'Miss Tully Era': firm discipline and right guidance into our awakening years.

The Headmistress, Miss Tully, was a very strict woman. We vividly recall her hairstyle, which she wore in rolls, the same way every day for three years. She constantly reminded girls from the other

side of the 'tracks' how lucky they were to be at Riverside.

Miss Tully, our Headmistress, was always immaculate - complete with hat, gloves and the inevitable handbag permanently glued to her arm! She was austere and aloof and therefore an awesome lady. I cannot remember ever seeing her smile and yet I did not dislike her either. She was a credit to Riverside as a Headmistress.



Miss Tully

The Deputy

While the formidable Miss Tully might remain in the memory of the old girls as the epitome of discipline and decorum, the Deputy Headmistresses, Miss Delaney and Miss Weir, provided the balance so essential in the leadership of a school. As Deputy Headmistresses they could obviously afford to be more the mother figure to the Riverside girls. The students obviously adored their different Deputy Headmistresses:

Miss Delaney was Deputy Headmistress and much admired. She was also always immaculately dressed - a slim figure in well cut suits or costumes as they were called then. I was particularly fond of her because she sparked my life long interest in Ancient History. We could always get her off the boring English History and on to her favourites, Nefertiti and Tutankhamon, at the drop of a hat! She was a most elegant lady.

Miss Delaney was Deputy Head and her beautiful clothes and bearing had an influence in my later life, her grooming was impeccable.

Miss Weir ... never passed by without a nod or smile.

It is, however, in the day to day running of the school that one is impressed with the spirit and loyalty of the 1950s students. Some remember their years at Riverside as the golden years while others describe them as the best years of their lives:



Student group outside the Canteen

My years at Riverside were very happy ones and I can look back with such wonderful memories. The school was really like a 'small private Girls College for young ladies' rather than a Secondary School institution. We didn't know it then of course - but compared with private Girls Colleges of today - Riverside then was unique in that way.

Hindsight seems to paint a happy picture. And why not? We were lucky people

in those three years, with a 'clutch' of teachers willing to teach and we to learn.

I was always proud to have been a Riverside girl.



Miss White with part of the Arboretum in the background

Memories of teachers

While Headmistresses and Deputies provide the necessary school leadership it is the teachers that are often the life blood of the school. The 1950s group seem to have been an outstandingly talented, energetic and involved group. Some of the ex-students' best memories are of their teachers. Some who stand out:

Mrs Aldred was my English teacher for my three years. How she loved and appreciated a well spoken young lady and poetry! She directed, produced and cried tears of blood over our plays - all Shakespeare of course! She encouraged pages upon pages of compositions - which as you may have guessed by now, I obliged willingly! I still have a book of poems she gave me inscribed 'To Irene Fleming for appreciative work in spoken English - Marjorie Aldred 1952'.

Mrs Aldred also had a genius for inspiring students' creative talents, and she gave great encouragement to creative writing in the school. It was she who got together the first school magazine



Riverside staff, 1957

Back Row: Miss D. Berghofer, Miss G. Gray, Miss R. Robertson, Mrs. R. Leadbetter, Miss J. Neasmith, Miss L. Lyon, Miss S. Morris, Mrs. K. Masters, Mrs. M. Monaghan, Mrs. M. Chapman, Mrs. M. Wheen, Mrs. P. Lavelle, Mrs. P. Haywood.
Middle Row: Mrs. M. Little, Miss B. Golding, Miss E. Watson, Miss M. Magee, Mrs. J. White, Mrs. A. Hoffman, Miss J. Rose, Mrs. C. Johnson, Mrs. N. Taylor, Miss B. Lumb, Miss H. Wylie, Mrs. G. Hourigan, Miss M. O'Donnell, Miss M. Browne.
Front Row: Miss S. Green, Mrs. I. Saunders, Miss F. Lanham, Miss D. Harper, Miss B. Williams, Miss N. Weir (Deputy Headmistress), Miss T. J. Tully (Headmistress), Miss E. Whitton, Mrs. M. Aldred, Miss L. Ferguson, Mr. J. Rowen,

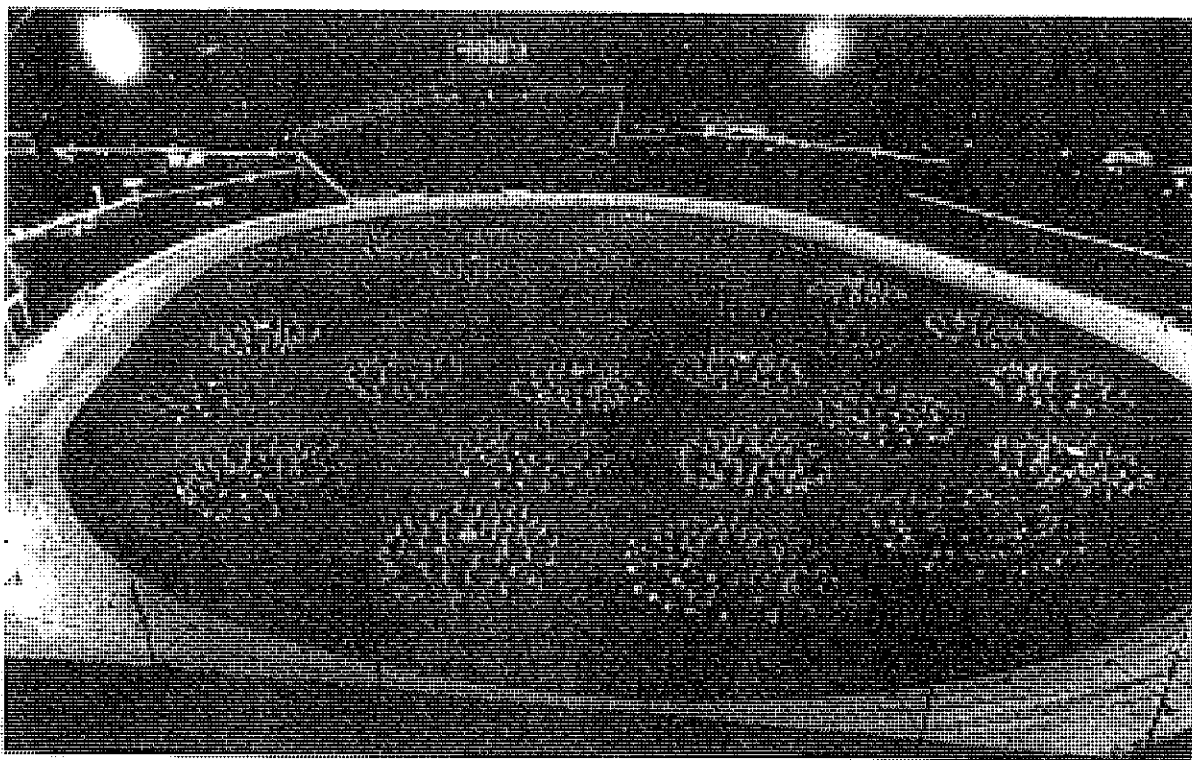
in 1956, which not only provided an outlet for creative writing, but also helped greatly in building up a feeling of school spirit.

I was fortunate in having another outstanding English teacher in my two final years - Mrs Marjorie Aldred. My relationship with her is, I guess, my happiest memory of fourth and fifty years. She was that rare person - an inspired teacher. She opened my eyes to the world of English literature, not just as an academic study, but as something that can lead us to formulate a system of values and philosophy of life for ourselves. I will always be grateful to her for opening the doors to 'The Realms of Gold' and for her real personal interest and encouragement. We have kept in touch over the years, and today I value her as one of my dearest friends.

Miss Blanton was our singing teacher

selected and trained those to be included in the huge combined Secondary Schools Choral Concert held in the Sydney Town Hall every year. They must have been simply fabulous - but we were too busy singing to enjoy them. Miss Blanton was a lot of fun. She squashed my adoration of film star and singer, Kathryn Grayson, by informing me that Miss Grayson sang through her nose and had absolutely no talent as a singer! Miss Blanton announced her engagement in 1952 and we all shared her excitement.

Miss Morrison was Sports Mistress and well liked by all the students. Each year a few students were selected to be included in the huge dance display of combined Secondary Schools at the Royal Easter Show and a lot of work went into this which must have been a great spectacle equal to those performed these days at Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Mrs Morrison also encouraged the dancing



Above: Showground
Display

Right: Playground



talent of girls in the school - and there were many of these. She organised the most fantastic concerts in the School Hall.



Student dance group

Mrs Marjorie Thorn-Clarke was also a singing teacher. I can't remember if she was there prior to Miss Blanton or simply a relieving teacher. She was without a doubt our most colourful teacher. She always addressed herself as "Marjorie" which was astounding. All the other teachers had initials and we could only guess what their first names must be - but this was Marjorie in the flesh. By the way, we all nearly died when we discovered Miss Tully was Tessie Tully! Mrs Thorn-Clarke - we never called her Marjorie to her face - was a tiny porcelain doll with lots of long "Shirley Temple" curls complete with ribbons and bows. She wore lots of flowing chiffon in floral patterns complete with tons of frills and jewellery and long scarlet painted fingernails! She always reeked of 4711 Cologne and used to dab us

behind the ears with her spare bottle on hot days to keep her cool. She disliked the rain and we loved it, for on those days we would talk about her dogs, the theatre and the excitement of her travels to other countries of the world. She sang like a thrush and we loved her very much.

Miss Beach was our second most colourful person. Art. Bright orange hair and very tight skirts. She must have caused a riot in the staff room! She had all the flair under the sun and we all had to use bright vivid colours in our work as she wouldn't tolerate dull colours.

Miss Wilson: The teacher who had a profound effect on my life was my darling Ancient History teacher Miss Wilson. The love of history she taught me has never left me. She opened doors for me and fired my imagination. I gave her a little brooch for Christmas and she wore it each day. Miss Wilson died when I was in Second Form and my schooldays were never the same.

Miss Lois Ferguson: I was fortunate to have for each of my first three years Miss Ferguson. I will always be grateful to her for introducing me to Shakespeare, and for laying the foundations of English grammar which I have never forgotten. I always looked forward to her English classes, and admired her as a lady of culture and refinement.

Being a girls' school the Department of Education staffed it with female teachers. The arrival of the first male teacher in 1952 is recorded by one besotted girl as an event of great significance. Art would never be the same at Riverside after Mr Lewis became the only male on the staff.

During Miss Tully's time Mr Edward Lester, known as 'George', became Caretaker. Presumably Mr Myers retired.

Memories of activities

With such inspirational teachers, is it little wonder that the 1950s achieved



Above: The school and the old Gladesville Bridge from Drummoyne. Below: Parents' Day, 1956

great cultural heights.

Physical Training led to Riverside girls being the guinea pigs for the Girls High Schools display at the Royal Agricultural Easter Show. Ten of us rehearsed at the Showground one night, so they could see what it would look like for the 2,000 odd girls required for the display.

Other happy memories are of the opportunities we were given to take part in plays. I remember, especially, playing Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream and wearing a beautiful dress made by Miss Ferguson's mother. Each Third Year class produced one scene of the play, and then it was all put together. I have since spoken to several people who still remember the experience as the beginning of a life-long love of Shakespeare.

Empire Day (24 May) was always cele-



brated in great style on the front lawn: pageantry and patriotism for both country and school. Loyal speeches and lusty singing of most national anthems of other Empire countries.

Every year we danced in the Sydney Town Hall for Health Week.

The one thing that the girls of the 1950s have not forgotten was their school uniform. No doubt the memories are so vivid as the school uniform was changed in 1956, when the school became a High School.

In summer, we had a plain grey dress, grey straw hat (with the school colours under the brim) and very lady-like grey gloves. In winter, the navy box-pleated tunic remained the same but was worn with grey blouses instead of white. A navy beret, grey stockings and again the typical 1950s grey gloves.

Pranks, exams and prefect elections

The timeless part of a school's history are the school girl pranks. Like any other decade the 1950s abounded with them - it is best to quote from the girls themselves:

Perhaps the highlight was defying discipline when all Third Year wagged school for a delightful day at Manly Beach. We told no one. How our teachers (secretly) enjoyed our escapade - and it was a lovely sunny day!

A very naughty student was I and many hours were spent standing in the corridor for some misdemeanor, like sliding down the bannisters, disrupting the class and generally being a bore.

During the 1950s a girls' school life was dominated by examinations. One ex-student explains in detail.

We received two reports a year and they were out of a percentage, out of 100, position in class and remarks from teachers for each subject, was given. We were also given average percentage and position on aggregate mark thus giving us an overall position in our year irrespective of subjects.

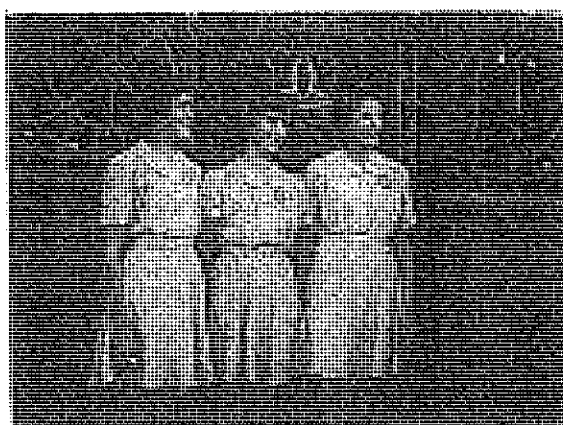
Home Economics was compulsory in First Year and we could continue into Second and Third Year or select the Business Course. The subjects I studied in First Year were: English, History, Elementary

Maths, Physiology, Needlework, Art and Home Economics (seven subjects).

In Second and Third Year I studied: English, History, Elementary Maths, Physiology, Business Principles, Short-hand, Typing, Needlework (eight subjects). Girls were graded in classes from A to D in most years. The A classes in all years contained the brightest students. Each class had an elected Captain and a Class Teacher.

One of the main events of the school year was the election of School Captain and Senior Prefects:

At the end of Second Year a few girls from each House were selected to stand for election as School Captain, Vice Captain and Senior Prefects for the next year. I can't remember how these "chosen few" were selected. Those selected were given about a week's notice to prepare a speech. Following assembly in the Quadrangle where the girls always stood in groups according to Houses, the candidates one by one publicly stated in their very best voices, why they should be elected. Following all the speeches by candidates, each student wrote the name of her choice for School Captain on a piece of paper which were collected and placed in a large container. Each House then voted in the same way for their choice of Senior Prefect for their House. The results were announced the following day by Miss Tully. This system



Captain, Sports Captain and Vice-Captain in the summer uniform

published for state-wide dissemination. Examples are the Social Sciences Year 7 Multicultural program and Other Approved Studies courses. This has done much to add to the reputation of Riverside and has also ensured that the school has had immediate access to innovative ideas from other areas of the state.

Riverside is often referred to as a "lighthouse" school - one which shows the way - or is it a light in the darkness? But this rather trite description does refer to the development by Riverside teachers of courses ahead of central initiatives and policies.

Even before Transition Education was instituted, Riverside teachers had developed an "alternative" (non-matriculation) HSC course. The aim of the Alternative Course for HSC students is to provide the opportunity for students not interested in pursuing academic tertiary studies, with a senior school course that is more relevant to their

needs and interests.

The core subjects, Work Skills and Work Experience in Year 11, and Skills for Living in Year 12, aim to provide an effective transition from school to independent life in society - at work, in a business, and at home.

Development of self-esteem and confidence assists in acquiring skills, and this is the rationale for a program which includes yoga and self-defence, study skills and radio broadcasting, peer group counselling, keyboard skills, car and home maintenance, the law and government, getting a job and setting up a co-operative.

The course was originally set up after application in 1979 for an Innovations Grant from the School Commission, and began in 1980 with seven Year 11 girls. Some left school and a couple joined the course in Year 12, so that four sat for their HSC in 1981 with less than the normal five Board subjects. The best student



Car maintenance in the Alternative Course

gained a nursing place in a major hospital.

Since then the popularity of the course has grown as parents, colleges and employees increasingly understand the nature of this HSC course and see the benefits that its students gain. Thirteen girls gained their HSC in 1983 in the "Alternative Course" and, in 1984, there are sixteen in Year 11 and nine in Year 12.

This course has also given an impetus to the development of Other Approved Studies courses which number some fourteen to date. They include Legal Studies, Self-Management, Drama, Journalism, How to Play an Instrument, Creating with Clay, Photography and Women in Australia.

The course has continued to be run with Transition Education funding and a staffing supplement. Riverside anticipates, however, both funding and staffing will be unavailable from 1985 and is modifying the course to exist without them.

Before any non-sexist policy was initiated, and before any special Projects for Girls funding and staffing, Riverside had begun a basic Woodwork Course for all Year 8 girls. This was funded (initial tools and furniture) from a Schools Commission Innovations grant. It should be noted that no supply of woodwork tables could be obtained from the Department because no allocation for such existed for girls schools. Despite a request for supply at the highest levels, the school had to buy its tables from Furniture Branch.

The course was developed and taught by the Deputy Principal, Mr Ron Coleclough, whose subject is Industrial Arts. He also developed an Other Approved Studies Course in Furniture Making (Year 12). Similarly, Technical Drawing was introduced as an elective in the Junior school.

Before any special policy existed, the Careers teacher, Ms Ainslie Morris, developed and encouraged Link Courses with technical colleges. Riverside was also one of the first schools to begin Work Experience programs.

Before the institution of School Courses in junior school, Riverside

developed its Living Skills Course.

Before Computer Education became a deliberate policy, Riverside staff had considered the direction they would take and had set aside money to equip the school.

Not all has been innovation and experimentation. The "Emery era" has been one of consolidation too. The aim has been for each girl to achieve her greatest potential. Hence intellectual talent has been and is considered of importance along with other talents and qualities.

The school academic standard has been raised so that Riverside now enjoys an enviable academic reputation. Until 1984, Year 12 (HSC) has numbered about fifty girls. (This year it is sixty-three and ninety-two are anticipated in 1985.) One third of that number go on to tertiary courses. Many have achieved well at University. One girl, Jenny Eggerton, was awarded the prize for top graduating woman in Sydney University's Medical faculty. Virtually each year girls are in the top 1% of the state in the HSC results.

The school produces winners in state Mathematics competitions, and finalists in Debating in state competitions. In sport, Riverside girls have won state championships in gymnastics, trampolining, swimming, sailing and rowing. With the widening of the range of sports in Years 8-10 (in Year 7 the girls are taught sports skills by specialist PE teachers) to include lawn bowls and judo. Riverside expects some champions there, too.

Although all staff have been encouraged to develop professionally, Miss Emery has particularly encouraged females who experienced second rate citizen attitudes or were prepared to accept second rate citizen status in other schools.

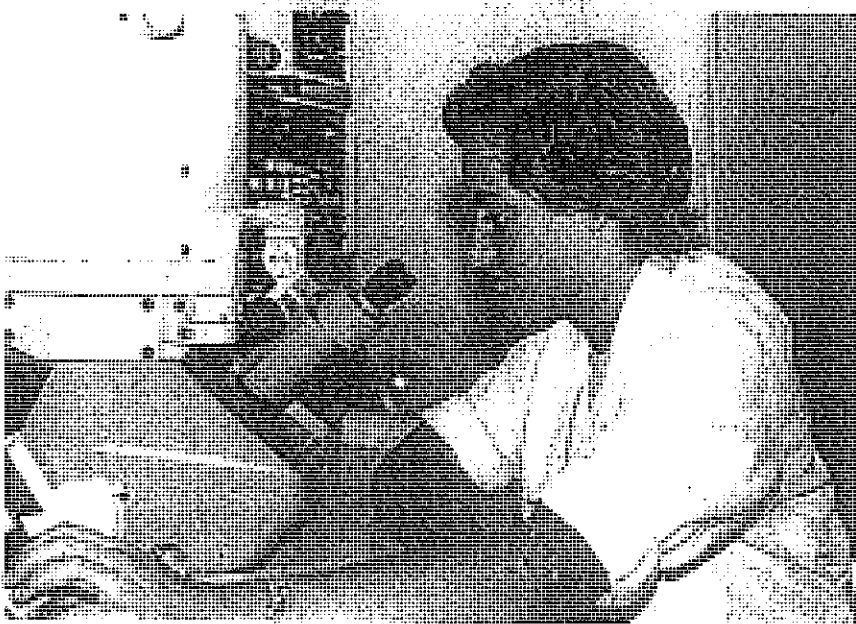
Staff development, for Miss Emery,

Opposite: Year 11 Work Experience

Top: Horse groom at Hansom Cab Co, Glebe

Middle: Horticulturalist at a Plant Nursery, North Ryde

Bottom: Scientific research at CSIRO, North Ryde





Year 8 Geography excursion to Shark Island

is not only relevant for her teaching staff, but also her ancillary staff whom she regards as an essential component in effective school organisation. The School Appraisal Report of October 1978, written by an external inspectorial panel, commented:

Of vital importance to the school is the supportive role of the ancillary staff. They understand what the school is striving for; they identify readily with the school and seek to maintain the high standards the school has established and for which it is known. The Principal deserves praise for her knowledge of the functions of ancillary staff and for the co-operation she receives.

The staff of Riverside

Miss Emery, herself, is a woman of academic achievement and wide interests. She sails when she can. She interested Miss Brenda See, Deputy Principal 1973-76, in sailing and together they bought a 22 ft sloop named "Moonraker" which is moored at



Being geographers on
Year 8 Shark Island excursion

Balmoral. From 1975 she has been the Sydney Dance Critic for The Australian, is very interested in the Arts, performing and visual, has a keen interest in growing native plants, is a dedicated animal lover, especially of dogs, and is a voracious reader though she claims her non-professional reading has dropped away to nothing recently under the heavy demands of professional reading.

These interests, as well as experience relieving in a Regional Office as a Professional Assistant and on inspectional panels have helped her in dealings with students, parents, staff and Regional and Head Offices, and in her management of the school, aspects of which are becoming increasingly more diverse and onerous for all High School Principals.

The Appraisal Panel summed up the Principal and staff in this way:

The Panel had an enjoyable time at

Riverside and were impressed with the leadership and the working together of an informed, loyal staff. The strongest impression was of dedication to improve the education of the students entrusted to their care. Staff strive to know children as individuals. They are ever conscious of their duty to help the student to understand herself, to foster her self-esteem, to provide situations to strengthen her ability to form relationships and to sharpen her cultural awareness and consideration for others. So much time has been spent in enriching the curriculum, developing structures and enhancing communication within and outside the school. Parents drew members of the Panel aside to speak in glowing terms of their school and what it has done for their children.

Riverside must rank highly as an efficient school. It has many ideas which could be used by other schools. Perhaps it is too modest - their work and



Open Day, 1983

successes should be shared and there are avenues for doing this.

Staff changes

The first retirement during the period was that of Miss Ispbell Saunders who had been a teacher of Social Sciences (originally Commerce) at Riverside since 1953.

Miss Saunders was a much loved teacher remembered by the girls for her courtesy and genuine interest in them. A small, vital woman with a strong face, she was firm and just. Her staff recall her academic excellence, her energy, hard work and humanity.

Other notable staff changes have included a male Deputy for the first time, Mr Ron Coleclough from May 1976, and a Caretaker, John Donker, who was appointed after the retirement of "George" Lester, who had been in the position for twenty years. (Sadly Mr Lester lived only a few years after his retirement.)



John Donker and Tammy

John Donker, a Dutchman, had been a tradesman builder. He brought these skills, and enormous energy and interest in the school, to his position. He, his wife Rose, and his German Shepherd, Tammy, became school and local identities. They have all just retired to Woolgoolga.

Mr Cyril Fowler, the grandfather-figure Mathematics Master, retired in 1979. He had been in poor health for a few years, but it was a shock when he died soon after retirement. Mrs Claire Fitzmaurice, Science teacher and ISCF leader for years, retired officially in 1984 though she went on leave at the end of 1983.

Two stalwart clerical assistants retired too. Mrs Aline Cane, the Senior CA, in 1976 and Mrs Enid Bowden in October 1982. Mrs Maureen Gordon replaced Mrs Cane as what has virtually become full-time school accountant and Mrs Irene Lake was promoted to Senior CA. Mrs Lake is a special school identity having been on staff since 1969. A bundle of energy, she is also the school's chief "receptionist", being on the switchboard and dealing with enquiries from the girls. Mrs Lake has also been the Girl Guides Movement for twenty years, including being District Commissioner, and is well known to girls and many parents as a Guider.

When the school population fell below 700, the Special Mistress's position was eliminated. Miss Lois Ferguson, as a result, had to move. She transferred to Galston High from where she retired. Form Mistresses also no longer were a paid, official position, though staff have always filled in the position in an unpaid capacity.

Other memories of staff

Miss Brenda See, Deputy from 1973 to May 1976, had been Commerce Mistress at Riverside from 1966 to 1970. Some of her ex-students recall her unflappable attitude and fine singing voice. She used to practise before school at Riverside and assist with the

choir. When she began sailing with Miss Emery, the girls soon became accustomed to both women signing girls out on Friday at the end of the day dressed in track suits ready to go sailing.

Some ex-students recall an energetic Mathematics teacher, Graham Wiley, who sped around in shorts and long socks, and who acquired some notoriety by marrying an ex-student a couple of years after she left Riverside.

Current staff, among whom there are strong personalities, include Mrs Shore, Mrs Gabell, Mrs Shapira, Miss McDonald, Miss Morris and Miss Celia Styles (the "permanent" casual relief teacher and "darling" of the school), to name a few. They are, no doubt, at present creating vivid memories with the students. The history of the school in the next fifty years, if written, will provoke anecdotes and recollections of these people and others.

Buildings, grounds, trees and money

Apart from the opening of the School Hall, there have been no external changes to the buildings of the school.

The Department had approved the building of the School Hall in 1971, but Miss Robbins, then Principal, refused to accept the Department's "offer" of one of the octagonal multi-purpose halls. She insisted, with the wholehearted and active support of the P & C that the building had to blend and harmonise with the site and the rest of the school, and as there was already a gymnasium (although undersized), argued that the school did not need a multi-purpose hall.

The present unique, architect-designed hall was opened in February 1973 when Miss Emery arrived. The grand piano was bought for the school at the insistence of Miss Margaret Cunningham, Miss Robbins' Deputy.

Miss Emery recalls visiting the



Drama in the Hall

school the week before Term 1 of 1973. The stage curtains were being sewn on stage by a man and woman. She commented that the curtain already up fell short a distance from the stage floor, but was assured it and the other would drop in time. They did not, and the school had to raise money to have the curtains rehung, along with a new tracking system to replace the original defective one, as well as acquiring leg (side) curtains and an intermediate curtain which were not originally supplied. Neither was a stage lighting system which is still, as yet, beyond school means to have installed. All groups using the hall must hire their lighting. The hall is available to all schools in the district (no fee is charged government schools) and is used almost all day by the school itself.

The builder of the hall immediately went bankrupt on its completion (though not because of the job), so the usual maintenance period provided under contract by the builder was not available.

This turned out to be a drawback since the tiles proved defective and there were serious leaks into the hall through the roof from the beginning. The tiles, an early concrete type, proved too friable and broke with sudden changes of temperature. Often when cracked ones were being replaced others would break as the tiler moved back over the roof. Staining of the wooden ceiling from the water occurred and can still be seen. It was not until 1981 that the tiles were completely replaced. Inevitably, the time chosen to replace the tiles coincided with the HSC examinations, so the girls had to be moved into the main building to do them.

However, while no extra building took place, the internal arrangements of the buildings altered as a response to change. With fewer pupils, most teachers could be allocated their own rooms. These were grouped into faculties as close as possible to faculty staff rooms and storerooms.

When the Subject Heads moved into staff rooms with their staff, their

original staff room became a Careers Office and Resource Room. The Inwood Staff Room became too small so a classroom was turned into a staff room and the old staff room became an office and interview room for the MIG.

A Science demonstration room with tiered seating was altered and made secure as an audio-visual room. Rooms have been set up specifically for ESL, Personal Development, Remedial-Resource, a Staff Common Room, and Woodwork Room. The latest specialist rooms are a control room and store for video programs and one for computers. Smaller rooms were turned into store-rooms.

A section of the toilet block was converted into fourteen showers with a change area. This freed the old change room at the back of the gym so it could become a PE storeroom.

In 1973 the school was in dire need of refurbishing. Miss Emery's enthusiasm to carry this out fortunately coincided with a flow of money from the State (but originally from the Commonwealth Government), and with an equally enthusiastic District Inspector, Mr Ron Tanner, to support requests for refurbishing.

Old, broken-edged brown lino in the corridors was replaced with vinyl tiles, as were the kitchen floors. The school was painted internally and the old screwed-down wrought iron-sided desks with lift-up seats, which some rooms still had, were replaced with new furniture.

One school building of importance which underwent changes - though not in structure - was the canteen. It had been leased and dissatisfaction with the type of food and prices had increased to the extent that a type of "strike" was reputed to have been staged in Miss Robbins' time.

The lease was given up at the end of 1974 and since Term 2 of 1975 the Canteen has been school-run, selling health foods only. Mrs Phyllis Agnew was the first Manageress, establishing the Canteen and running it with the voluntary assistance of some of the mothers of the girls. After her gradual

retirement, Mrs Irene Horrigan (three days per week) and Mrs Cecily Burbridge (two days per week), have taken over. (Both are ex-students and parents of the school.) Canteen profits are used by the school for special equipment.

Much ground improvement has been carried out. First was the development of a car park which had become necessary with the building of the hall. Cars were also parking on the hockey field and cutting up the ground. Miss Emery claims she has become an expert on what road base material to put in car parks as a result. A concrete ramp which proved dangerously slippery into the car park has been altered so it has steps.

With P & C agitation and unfailing support (Miss Emery enjoys the best of relationships with her P & C), a new water line and fire hydrant service ringing the school was put down. The gas line has also been recently replaced. Not, as yet, the sewer line, but

it is next on the list.

The hockey field which was badly holed and uneven has been top soiled and re-grassed. Two all-weather tennis-netball courts were built at the front of the school in 1981, partly as the result of four years of fund raising by walkathons by the girls. The Department paid for the basic work and one court and the girls paid \$8,000 for a second court. These were built on the site of a former bitumen tennis court which had long fallen into disrepair. As preparation for the building of these courts, the contractor covered over the original path and steps to the road below, to the original front gate. This was to create more playing area.

The conservation and care of the school ground, and the planting of shrubs and trees are dear to Miss Emery's heart. With the enthusiastic support of girls and staff, over two hundred-trees and shrubs have been planted in her time but, as she points out, this is still far short of the two



Rats bred on the premises and used in Riverside Science classes

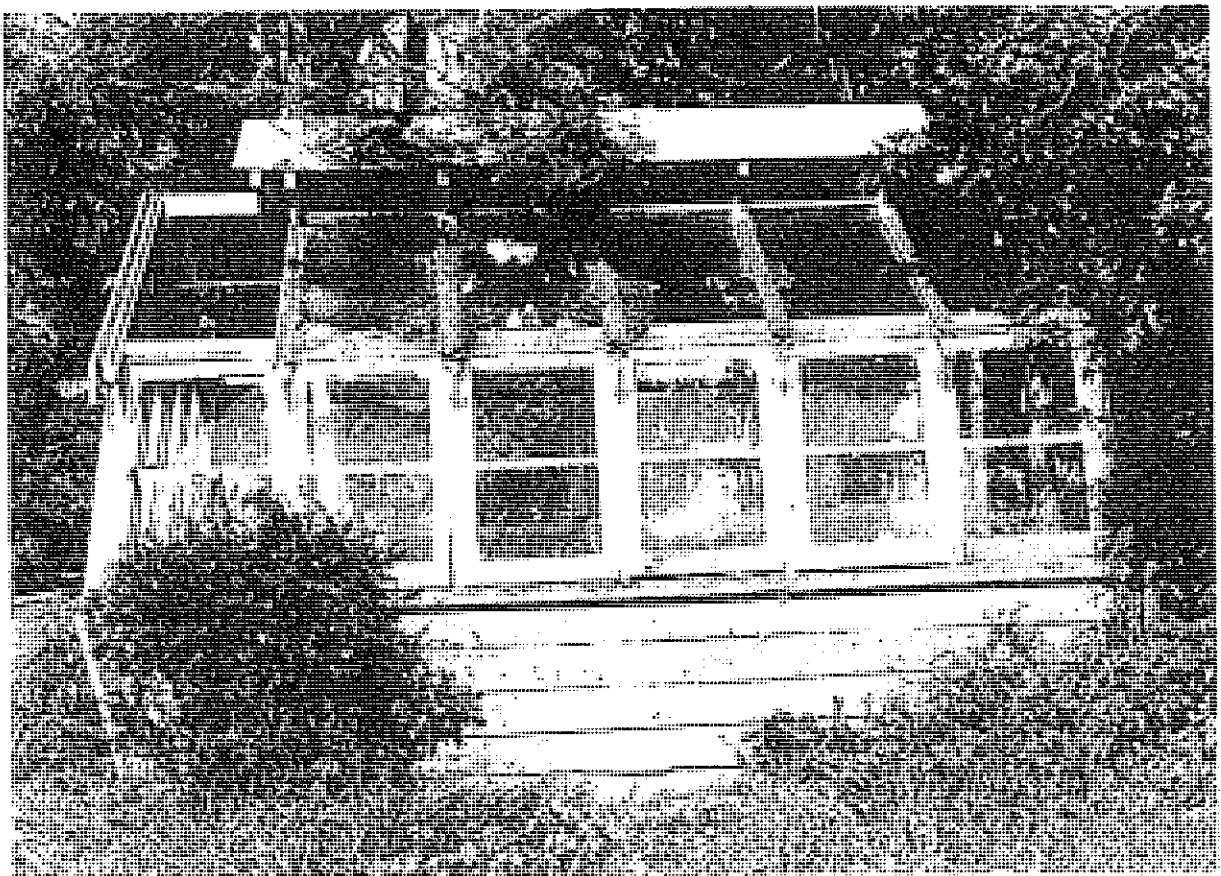
thousand planted in Miss Nielsen's four years (though she has only just discovered her predecessor's passion for tree planting). Miss Emery has also caused squares in the quadrangle to be ripped up and trees planted there. One of her vivid impressions of Riverside when she first visited in November 1972 was the dazzling glare from all that concrete in the quadrangle. "Like Alcatraz", she commented. Except for the odd exotic tree for a special reason, the trees and shrubs planted have all been natives and, as far as possible, indigenous to the area.

When the flow of money from the Government dried up, the school was, and still is, forced to raise much of its own funds, particularly for special purposes. The Science Department, under the initial leadership of its Master, Brian Shadwick, began to farm rats for sale to other schools for use in Science lessons.

Directed by Mrs Josie Kenny, the

Laboratory Assistant (who has worked unstintingly out of hours and during holidays too), and with successive student helpers, the amazing sum of \$20,899 has been raised since June 1977. Of this, \$12,000 went towards the installation in the school of the CLIC system of video transmission (ten classrooms have outlets) and some monitors. More money raised has bought micro-computers, and a small sum has gone towards the continuing project of restoring the Arboretum. As well, the Science Department has been able to buy equipment such as a film projector, freezers, stencil files and chart holders. The current Science Master, 'Graham Jones, has assumed overall direction of the scheme which has been scaled down considerably recently.

The latest fund raising measure, chocolate selling, under the direction of Miss Prell and PE staff member Miss Marty Kirchhof, has raised \$8,000



Arboretum before repair

over two years, allowing the school to buy a plain paper copier for the clerical office, a colour video camera and monitor, and a large gym mat. The pity is that such fund raising efforts are necessary for so many essential items.

Towards the year 2000 and beyond

If the '70s and early '80s have been years of change in society, educational policies and directions, and schools, there are even greater changes likely in the last part of the '80s and beyond.

Already the Principal and staff are considering proposed changes in secondary education, some of which may be radical. Also in the offing are changes in the staffing of schools, in

particular its executive. What, too, of the involvement of the community in schools in School Councils?

As the changes are considered and responded to, some fundamentals remain unchanged. The most important is the minute by minute contact between a student and a teacher. Riverside has an enviable record in providing the best possible physical and human circumstances for this to happen.

Riverside has succeeded in providing a wealth of happy memories and satisfaction for several generations of women who want their daughters and granddaughters to become part of their own educational heritage. Many women today say with pride "I am a Riverside girl".

This is the final accolade of a school.

Headmistresses and Principals

Camellia Olivia Nielsen

Date of Birth: 9.1.1874

19.1.1893 On probation as Pupil
Teacher at Young
12.1896 Gained full scholarship by
examination, for admission
to training school
28.1.1897 Admitted to Hurlstone
Training School
12.1897 Training session ends
Temporary attendance at:
14.12.1898 West Leichhardt
19.12.1898 Gardeners Road
5.3.1898 Pyrmont
8.2.1899 Forest Lodge
Appointed teacher at:
10.5.1902 Young
12.1.1909 South Wagga Wagga
1911 Young
26.2.1913 Glebe
18.2.1914 St Peters
23.3.1917 Erskineville
27.7.1921 Drummoyne
8.11.1933 Appointed Headmistress at
Riverside Central Domestic
Science school
8.1.1938 Retired

Josephine E. Smith

Date of Birth: 28.8.1885

9.10.1903 On probation as Pupil
Teacher at Glenmore Road
Public School
14.2.1905 Pupil Teacher at Leich-
hardt Public School
24.9.1906 Gained scholarship by
examination, for admission
to training school
Appointed teacher at:
1908 Summer Hill
1.8.1911 Ashfield
1.9.1911 Cleveland Street
31.5.1913 Wellington
6.4.1915 Alma

Appointed Mistress at:

23.3.1917 North Broken Hill
2.1.1920 Croydon
14.3.1922 Lidcombe
19.6.1923 West Marrickville
24.3.1927 Bankstown
23.11.1932 Leichhardt
2.12.1937 Appointed Headmistress at
Riverside Domestic Science
School

Ethel Josephine Wicht

Date of Birth: 1.2.1885

29.7.1902 On probation as Pupil
Teacher at Tumut
8.9.1905 Gained scholarship by
examination, for admission
to training school
Appointed Teacher at:
23.1.1908 Junee
11.5.1909 Bathurst
4.6.1909 Orange
30.9.1909 West Leichhardt
28.7.1910 Nicholson Street
24.4.1911 Blackfriars
15.1.1923 Lithgow
Appointed Mistress at:
21.1.1924 Wellington
7.1.1925 Mayfield East
28.3.1927 Wickham
5.12.1927 South Strathfield
8.5.1929 Cleveland
11.12.1929 Stanmore
29.6.1939 Appointed Head Mistress at
Riverside Domestic Science
School
31.1.1949 Retired

Teresa J. Tully

Date of Birth: 26.2.1894

1913-14 Trained

Appointed Teacher at:
 11.9.1914 Willoughby
 25.2.1915 Fort Street
 21.1.1918 Cobar
 8.1.1920 Summer Hill
 31.5.1920 Newtown
 4.1.1921 Kurri Kurri
 5.1.1922 Chatswood
 6.9.1924 West Wallsend
 14.12.1925 Lane Cove
 28.12.1928 Artarmon
 10.1.1930 Drummoyne
 Appointed Mistress at:
 23.1.1933 Mayfield East
 29.11.1935 Woollahra
 1.2.1941 Bondi Beach
 26.11.1942 Mosman Home Science
 30.1.1945 Randwick Home Science
 14.12.1948 Appointed Head Mistress at
 Riverside Home Science
 26.1.1959 Retired

Dorothy Darling Dey

Date of Birth: 15.10.1903

1924-25 Trained (BA, DipEd) plus MA
 Appointed Teacher at:
 22.1.1926 Narrabri
 13.4.1928 Gunnedah
 4.7.1928 Gosford
 23.1.1929 Deniliquin
 21.1.1931 Newcastle Girls High
 13.12.1933 North Sydney Girls High
 2.1.1946 Hunter Home Science High
 12.12.1947 Appointed English/History
 Mistress at Fort St GHS
 3.12.1954 Appointed Deputy Head
 Mistress at Fort St GHS
 30.9.1958 Appointed Principal at
 Riverside Girls High
 29.1.1963 Appointed Principal at
 North Sydney Girls High
 12.12.1968 Retired

Thora Clayton (nee Boesen)

Date of Birth: 6.1.1910

1928-31 Trained (BA, DipEd)
 Appointed Teacher at:
 27.5.1932 Auburn
 6.9.1932 Forbes
 7.1.1936 Katoomba
 30.7.1937 Leeton

Appointed Teacher at:
 12.1937 Crown Street
 28.12.1938 Lismore High
 12.1.1943 Newcastle Girls High
 12.12.1944 Sydney Girls High
 Appointed Mistress at:
 2.12.1949 Newcastle Girls High
 11.2.1952 Sydney Girls High
 4.12.1956 Appointed Deputy Principal
 At Wiley Park Girls High
 Appointed Principal at:
 30.10.1959 Bankstown Girls High
 18.2.1963 Riverside Girls High
 23.1.1969 Married Arthur Clayton
 28.1.1969-
 5.1.1970 Long Service Leave
 5.1.1970 Retired

Mary Louise Robbins

Date of Birth: 12.12.1912

1930-33 Trained (BA)
 Appointed Teacher at:
 27.7.1934 Swansea
 14.5.1935 Glenbrook
 22.1.1946 Parramatta Domestic
 Science
 10.1.1940 Kurri Kurri
 22.1.1942 Dulwich Hill Secondary
 Home Science (SHS)
 3.5.1944 Bankstown SHS
 16.1.1947 Dulwich Hill SHS
 14.12.1952 Parramatta SHS
 27.11.1953 Canterbury SHS
 26.11.1958 Appointed Mistress at
 Canterbury Girls High
 30.10.1963 Appointed Deputy Principal
 at Fairfield Girls High
 31.1.1967 Appointed Deputy Principal
 at Riverside Girls High
 28.1.1969 Appointed Principal at
 Riverside Girls High
 14.12.1972 Retired

Mary Patricia Emery

Date of Birth: 1.12.1932

1950-54 Trained (BA(Hons)(Syd),
 DipEd(STC))
 1972 LittB(UNE)
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1.1.1963	Appointed English/History Mistress at Liverpool	30.1.1973	Appointed Principal at Riverside Girls High

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