

# FROM THE ARCHIVES #100

## REFLECTIONS ON 1915

Speech Day was held on June 24, the third time it had been held mid-year. The reason for the change was, because the Senior Examinations undertaken by the University of Queensland were held at the end of the year: until 1911 all examinations were undertaken by the University of Sydney who held their examinations mid-year. Attending the Speech Day were Tom Foley MLA, J.N.Parkes, a local politician, and his Excellency the Governor and Lady Goold-Adams. The Governor arrived late as the ship he was travelling on was late in docking. Also attending that Speech Day were two students who, one hundred years on, are remembered in our School. R.P.Rheuben, a generous benefactor has had the Science Block named after him as well as prizes for Year 12 Physics and Chemistry. C.W.Bingham rose to be a renowned journalist and author and the Colin Bingham Writing Awards are awarded each year in our Junior School. A third student attending was C.W.Davidson who served with distinction in both World Wars and after 1945 became a prominent politician, being awarded a knighthood in 1964 for his services as a minister and to the nation.

World War One was very much to the forefront of the School's thoughts in 1915. Five past students and one former master, D.N.MacGregor, were killed at Gallipoli. Visiting the School in August, the Queensland Director of Education, R.H.Roe, commented on the fact that he had taught MacGregor while he was a student at Brisbane Grammar and that, when on an inspection tour to Townsville, he had climbed Castle Hill with his former pupil. Mr Roe is reputed to have said: "Poor Mac. Alas! He has climbed other heights since scaling the Hill." Our Early Education Centre has been named after D.N.MacGregor who was killed at ANZAC Cove on April 25, 1915.

In his Speech Day report, Mr Rowland spoke on three topics that still resonate a hundred years later. The first concern was the drought out west and how it was having an effect on the students and school finances. The second concern was the dengue fever outbreak among the boarders. Forty-two of the fifty-nine boarders were affected during the year. The third concern was how the North was being disadvantaged in contrast to those residing in the Brisbane region. Mr Rowland used as examples the number of scholarships being awarded to Brisbane students in comparison to those residing in the North. In the same vein Mr Rowland commented on the fact that three local students had passed their examinations and medical tests for entrance to the Australian Naval College but were then rejected on "medical grounds" on arrival down south.

In spite of the outbreak of the conflict in Europe and issues as mentioned above, 1915 was a good year for the School. Enrolments were at a record number with one hundred and twelve students enrolled, fifty-nine boarders and fifty-three day students. Examination results, at both the Senior and Junior level, were good with R.G.Lanskey being awarded a Queensland University Open Scholarship and R.P.Rheuben being awarded a Teacher's Scholarship. Only twenty scholarships were awarded each year by the University of Queensland. Miss R.Hill finished first out of one hundred and ninety who sat for the State Civil Service [Ordinary Division] examination.

The School concert in 1915 was very much a reflection of the year and the curriculum undertaken by the students. Among the songs sung by the choir was "Toll for the Brave" while student performances consisted of poetry in Latin, a French play written by Moliere "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and Shakespeare's "Midsummer's Night Dream." This was always a popular choice as it gave the students the opportunity to dress up and have fun. Sport, on the other hand, did not have a good year due to the privations of the war. There was no interschool football played during the year and the only interschool cricket was played by the Second and Third XI's. The schools they played against were Ross Island and West End. The First XI usually played in the Townsville Seniors' Competition which, because of the war, was cancelled. Interhouse athletics took place but there was no swimming carnival during the year.



Olympia Theatre, Townsville, c1928.

### Failure ?

THEY climbed such crags as none had climbed before ;  
They dared such death as none before had dared ;  
Out from the forts flames of fierce welcome flared,  
While the great ships sent thunders to the shore.

Hundreds will see Australian homes no more ;  
Brave lad, who of life's joys nor thought nor cared,  
But fought, fought on, and never once despaired,  
Though every voice of hell might shriek and roar.

They failed : for "someone blundered." All in vain  
Once and once more the foe they backward hurled :  
They failed : the long months pass : they are withdrawn,

A failure ; but the loss is their land's gain,  
A darkness that vaticinates the dawn,  
A failure that will help to save the world.

R.

The social event of the year would have been the Boarders' Dinner. The concept of the dinner had been initiated by Mr Hodges in the 1890s and was, in many respects, a second Speech Day. Trustees were invited and speeches were made by the Headmaster, staff and senior students. A concert was then held as a finale to the dinner. At the 1915 dinner patriotic songs were sung including the rousing "Are we down hearted?" As a special treat the boarders then went into town to the Olympia Theatre to see the epic Italian silent film "Cabiria." Directed by Giovanni Pastrone, the film is regarded as innovative because it was one of the first films to make extensive use of a moving camera. It was a technique that was used later by the legendary Cecil B deMille.

The year could best be summed up by the sonnet written by Mr Rowland towards the end of the year. (For those lovers of the English language it was a wonderful example of how a sonnet should be written.)

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