

PARKER-HALL HOUSE

At the start of second term 1893 Mary Foley became the first girl to be admitted to the School. In third term she was followed by Letitia Crowder and, with their enrolments Grammar became the first co-educational secondary school on the Australian mainland. However, it was to take another one hundred years before the concept of girl boarding was implemented. Mr Stephen Paul became Headmaster in 1993 and one of the first plans he proposed to the Trustees, to celebrate a centenary of girls, was that girl boarding be introduced. The Trustees were keen on the idea and girls' boarding was introduced a year later. To accommodate the influx of girl boarders a new boarding house was built and opened in April 1996. The building was named Parker-Hall in honour of Grammar's two Rhodes Scholars.



George Hall came to Grammar in 1905 as a boarder from Charters Towers. A scholarship holder he was the first winner of the Lilley Medal for the best results in the Queensland scholarship examinations. A brilliant all-round student Hall was soon to make his mark on the School. By 1906 he was in the 1st XI and dominating at athletics. He was also Dux of Form IV with a particular ability in languages. At Speech Day in that year he performed roles in Greek and French. In the 1907 Sydney Junior Examinations he attained 6 A's and 2 B's and received the best results by a boy in a Queensland School.

In 1908 Hall was appointed a prefect as well as captain of cricket. He was also made School librarian and assistant editor of the magazine. In 1909 he was Head of School and winner of the Chelmsford Cup as the best all-round student. As a result of the Sydney Examination results, he was awarded the first School of Mines Exhibition. In that year he passed the examinations in Greek, Latin, French, English, Ancient History, Algebra, Trigonometry, Mechanics and Chemistry. Dux of the School in 1909 he also performed on Speech Day in plays written in French, Latin and Greek as well as in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. On Sports' Day he won the high jump, broad jump, 100, 440, 880 yards and mile as well as the 120 yards hurdles and throwing the cricket ball. His record for throwing the cricket ball was only broken in 1996. To add to his talents he also achieved the best results in Queensland for the Empire Shoot, a competition between schools in the British Empire.

George Hall entered Lincoln College [Oxford] as a medical student but changed to engineering. He received a 2nd class honours degree before joining a firm in Scotland. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force during World War One before returning to Australia. He lived in Sydney until his death in 1972. For many years he was a supervising engineer in the Main Roads Department.



Chester Parker was born in Charters Towers but his family moved to Collinsville where he undertook his primary school education. Chester came from a large family that struggled to make ends meet. His father drove a cart carrying coal from Collinsville to Bowen twice a week in order to support his family. There can be no doubting that this family background motivated Chester to work very hard to achieve the best he could at school and later, at university.

Chester came to Grammar in 1930 on a State scholarship. At the 1931 Queensland Junior Examination he achieved distinctions in Latin, History, Geography and Chemistry and credit passes in French, Algebra, Geometry and Arithmetic. In 1933 he was offered an extension scholarship by the School and repeated his final year with some success. At the 1934 Queensland Senior Examination he achieved distinctions in all his six subjects. As a result he was awarded prizes for Chemistry, Mathematics, Latin and French and at the end of the year won a Queensland University Open Scholarship, one of only twenty awarded each year.

While not as good at sport as George Hall, Chester played for the School's cricket and football team and was a good shot putter. He also took part in many of the School Productions and in 1934 had the lead in Sheridan's play *The Critic*. He was a prefect in 1933 and Head boy in 1934 and was the winner of the Chelmsford Cup as Best All Round Boy in 1933 and 1934.

Chester Parker entered St John's College at the University of Queensland in 1935 studying for a Bachelor of Arts. In the same year he was awarded the first Rotary Bursary awarded in North Queensland. At the presentation the Headmaster, Mr Rowland, remarked that "*in all his long experience in teaching he had never come across a more hard-working and conscientious student.*" At the university Chester became involved in the Student Union becoming secretary and president in successive years. He also represented the university at football and tennis as well as at conferences interstate. He also took part in the University drama and debating clubs. In 1938 he became Townsville Grammar's second student to be awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

He studied law at Oxford before enlisting in the British Navy. His first ship, HMS Dungevan Castle, was torpedoed in 1940. In 1942 the submarine, HMS Thorn, on which he was serving as a Lieutenant, was sunk while on patrol in the Mediterranean. The ship has never been found.

The Parker-Hall building consists of three levels. Each section has been named after a past student. The girls' dormitories have been named after the first two girls to attend the School, **Mary Foley [1893-1896]** and **Letitia Crowder [1893-1896]**. Letitia Crowder went on to become a respected school mistress and in 1912 became the first secretary/treasurer of the Old Girls' Union. Mary Foley married young and had five children, all of them attending the School. The Mary Foley-Elliott award is presented annually to the Dux of the School.

The boys' dormitories have been named after past boarders who were killed in wars. **Henry Foot [1894-1899]** and his brother **Alexander Foot [1904-1908]** were both killed during the Gallipoli campaign. The Foot family has also donated their medals to the School and they were currently displayed in the Principal's office. **Malcolm McConachy [1961-1965]** joined the Australian Army on leaving school and rose to the rank of Lance-Corporal in the 9th Royal Australian regiment. He was killed in February 1969, aged twenty-one, during the Vietnam War.

MR BILL MULLER
School Archivist