

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY **Inc.**

P.O. BOX 175, KEW 3101

President:

Hon. Secretary:

Rev. Morris Watson

Miss Lex Allen

January 1994

NEWSLETTER No. 54

Dear Members,

Should be Oct 1994

Our Annual Meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 12th. October in the Phyllis Hore Room behind the Library.

After the office bearers have given their reports, there will be the election of the committee for 1994/1995. Under our Rules of Incorporation the Committee consists of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, an Archivist and two other members. The retiring office bearers are eligible for re-election. However, Mrs. Helen Reeve (Vice-President) and Miss Marge McLiesh (Committee member) do not wish to re-nominate.

NOMINATIONS:

All nominations for office bearers and Committee members should be made in writing, on forms available from the Secretary. They should be signed by the proposer, the seconder and the nominee, and should be in the hands of the Secretary at least 15 minutes before the commencement of the Annual Meeting.

GUEST SPEAKER: The Guest speaker at the meeting will be Mr. Ian Poulter, District manager, Kew.

COMING EVENTS:

Tuesday 1st. November: Cup Day outing to Queenscliffe. The coach will leave from outside the Library at 9.15 a.m. Bookings should be made with our Hon. Secretary, Miss Lex Allen (Phone:

). The cost of the trip is \$15 per person. Bring your own picnic lunch

Wednesday, 9th. November: 7.30 p.m. Visit to Carmelite Monastery, 94 Stevenson St., Kew.

Friday, 9th December, 7.30 p.m: Christmas Party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sartori, 15 Belmont Avenue, Kew. Those whose family names begin with A to L are asked to bring a savoury supper plate, and those whose family names begin with M to Z are asked to bring cakes etc..

Santa Claus asks that we all bring a small wrapped and labelled gift (not over \$2), men to bring one for a man and ladies to bring one for a lady.

Wednesday, 8th. February 1995: First meeting for 1995. The year's program will be sent to you before that meeting. Any suggestions you have for speakers, outings etc. for the year will be gladly received by the new Committee.

Morris Watson
President

REMINISCENCES OF TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL - further excerpts.

(Continued from Newsletter No.52, October 1993)

We continue with Ken Sillcock's comments on the Dalton Plan, which was used in the school in the 1920's:

"The school reverted to more traditional teaching in 1927 or early 1928. Those of us in Leaving Honours science were pleased to have more contact with our teacher who, under the Dalton Plan, had to give much of his time to checking assignments done by those in lower forms.

"The Headmaster, Frank Shann, was admirable both for his readiness to experiment with the Plan and for his capacity to end a cherished experiment when he saw a need to do so. I still think the Plan had many advantages. It afforded a good deal of opportunity to give one-to-one teaching to those who needed it without leaving the more able students idle or bored.

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Range of subjects taught.

Having listed the subjects taught at Trinity, and at most schools of that time, the author continues:

"With its limited range of subjects in 1925 the school did not need a large staff of specialists. It was possible for one to know all the members of the staff quite well, especially as most of them were also "form masters". Each form gathered in its own room, with its own master, at the beginning of the school day, for roll call and other formalities.

The school did arrange music lessons for those who wished to take them (and whose parents could afford the extra fee), and there was a piano available for practice in the junior common room. Our other experience in music took in some of the then modern hit tunes which the Rhodes brothers played on their gramophone. This underwent an interesting variation when the gramophone spring broke. We then found that it was possible to play records backwards by setting the needle at the centre of a record and turning in manually in the "wrong" direction. This taught that music has certain progressions of notes which are pleasing to the ear, whereas reversal of these engenders some very different reactions in the hearers!

During my years at Trinity the boys of St. Paul's Cathedral choir first came to obtain their education at Trinity instead of at their own school, as formerly. However, I saw little of them, as they were in some of the lower forms. Usually they had to go to the Cathedral after school classes ended, so they had little opportunity to take part in sport and other extra-curricular activities."

Not all rote learning

There is some tendency nowadays to think that the late 1920's were largely an age of rote learning, but this was indeed not the whole truth of science teaching at Trinity. Certainly

we were expected to learn some definitions and formulae and to commit them to memory. Bright was apt to reinforce this by suddenly asking a pupil a question such as, "What's a watt?" But we did learn much about the methods by which research and experiment had led humanity to the current understanding of physical phenomena. This made the learning of science most interesting. Moreover, we were led to understand what we were doing and why, when working on physics problems such as those involving force, motion, acceleration and gravity, or on quantitative chemical problems in which some of the data given were not needed. I took issue on these matters in my 1976 course essay on "The Historical Approach to Science Teaching" (Diploma of Education course). I quote extracts from the summary of this essay:

"This paper proposes that, in teaching scientific knowledge, we should recapitulate the path by which the knowledge was initially gained. The aim is to impart understanding of science as an ongoing human activity.

"Children should not have to ask, 'Which formula should I use?' They should be given the understanding which would enable them to deduce, from underlying principles, which formula is applicable to a particular problem. We should not be so geared to producing skill in answering right-or-wrong questions which a computer can mark for us.....

"An analogy is drawn between learning science and reading a detective story in which successive tentative theories are developed and evaluated in respect to the crime being investigated. Scientific discoverers acted like detectives - so why lose the excitement of discovery by telling the students, in advance, what happens on the last page of the story?"

The Debating Society

Many of us gained self-confidence from our voluntary participation in the Debating Society, which held a number of debating evenings each year with a master as adjudicator and friendly commentator and a substantial audience of boys. Activities ranged from impromptu debates, on subjects assigned without notice, to organised team debates on topics announced well in advance so that the teams could do research and develop strategies. One debate, done with frequent reference to a large map, examined the question whether Britain should maintain a naval base at Singapore. The negative case, details of which I do not recall, could have been interesting in the light of later events. At one stage we conducted a mock election over some weeks of campaigning leading to the voting itself, and then sat as a mock parliament with an impromptu element at Question Time. It was interesting later to be taken on a visit to Parliament itself, though not in connection with the Debating Society. One such visit (possibly earlier) was to the Federal Parliament, which then used Parliament House in Melbourne. On that occasion Stanley Bruce was Prime Minister in a coalition government, and Billy Hughes, who had been Prime Minister many years earlier, was still sitting in the House of Representatives.

Final comments:

This account contains much that might seem trivial to the students of today, none of whom are boarders. Yet it is often

the small details recorded in old letters and diaries that enable the historian to build up an authentic picture of life in past times.

For those of us who were boarders, Trinity was a way of life during term, much more than it was for day boys. We forgot it quickly during our vacation pursuits, but settled comfortably into it again when each new term began.

Despite the light-hearted moments recorded here, it was a serious life, a life of constant but mainly happy endeavour. We thought we could see a secure future ahead; for we still believed that the world had gone through the War to End War, and the trauma of the financial depression of the 1930's was not yet upon us. I do not envy modern youth all the uncertainties it faces, but I still believe that all the pressing problems can be resolved if the human race as a whole will summon up the will to deal resolutely with them, evolving new ideas from the old. True progress comes through evolution, the building upon and modifying that which has already been achieved, not by revolution which seeks to sweep away all that has been achieved in the past and too often replaces it with something at least as imperfect.

(Comment: So end these Reminiscences. The full text exceeded 21 foolscap pages of single-spaced typing. Copies are held by the Society's archives, by Kew Library and by the library of Trinity Grammar School - for any who want to read the bits that "might seem trivial").

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Kew Historical Society Inc. will be held on Wednesday, 12th. October 1994 at 8 p.m. in the Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library, Cotham Road, Kew.

The business to be transacted at this meeting will be:

- (1) Reports of office bearers for the year ending 30th. September 1994.
- (2) Election of office bearers for the year 1994/95.

According to the Rules of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, all positions become vacant and any member wishing to nominate for any position on the committee should obtain a nomination form from the Secretary:

"20(1). Nominations of candidates for election as officers of the Society or as ordinary members of the committee:

(a) shall be made in writing, signed by two members of the society (as proposer and seconder) by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination and:

(b) shall be delivered to the secretary of the society at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the Annual General Meeting".

(3) Subscriptions for the year 1994/95 became due on 1st. July 1994 and are payable prior to the Annual General Meeting.

(4) Any other business of which prior notice has been given.

MAURICE GERALD HEVEY B.E.M.

We record the death at age 96 of Gerry Hevey, founder and Life Member of Archery Australia, Archery Victoria and Kew City Bowmen. His B.E.M. was awarded for service to the sport of archery. During service in World War 1 he designed a bow which could deliver a rifle grenade 60 yards into enemy positions.

Information from Fred Cullen, of Ivanhoe Sub-branch R.S.L.