



BLACKTHORN NEWS

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Blackthorn Centenary - celebrating 100 years of 'A School on the Towers'

HISTORY OF OUR BADGE

In 1921, Alexander Tait was enrolled in Thornburgh College as a boarder, his enrolment number being 94. He completed his Senior year in 1924 excelling in Football, Athletics, Swimming, Tennis and Cricket. He also received Colours for his achievements and was a Prefect. Today the A.A. Tait Cup is awarded to any boy who has excelled in these five sports, an award which is not given often.

On the 17th March 1924, the Old Boys Association was formed – Alex spent some time in Charters Towers in early 1925 before heading off to study at the Dental College in Brisbane. During this period, he joined the Old Boys Association and received his Old Boys badge. On completing his studies, he returned to Charters Towers where he eventually started his own dental practice.

On the 14th August 1935, the Old Boys Association and the Old Girls Association merged to form the Blackthorn Past Students Association. T.R. McKenzie, the then Principal, was the first President with Alex Tait as Vice President. Records show that Alex Tait was also the BPSA representative at the dedication of the

Memorial Fountain in 1947.

Alex had three sons, the youngest of whom lives here in Charters Towers. Fergus, who is a volunteer at the local Zara Clark Museum recently donated his mother's jewellery. There, in one of the little drawers was his father's original Old Boys badge. Fergus agreed with me that it belonged in the BPSA Archives rather than in the Zara Clark Museum. This badge will be on display in pride of place in our new Archives.

The Blackthorn Past Students' badge has not been changed since the original combined badge but with the College about to enter its second century and the BPSA needing more badges, it was thought that perhaps it was time for a change. The new badge has been based on aspects of Alex Tait's Old Boy's badge and aspects of the combined badge. It will not of course say "Thornburgh College Old Boys Association" but rather "Blackthorn Past Students Association".

Wear it with pride!
Ann Gibbon (Patterson)

Sine Domino Frustra

I was asked to write a piece for the School's shared BTC Times/Blackthorn News, in this our Centenary year, on one of the traditions that have continued over the 100 years of the Schools, namely the badge and the motto.

As I researched, I discovered two articles, one written in 1982 by the Blackheath Captain Karen Hartley, at the start of a new era for the Blackthorn Magazine and the other in 1926 by Thornburgh Prefect and Blackthorn Magazine Editor, E.A. Francis.

Karen's 1982 article came from material recorded by Mr Hal Taylor, a letter from Dr T.R. McKenzie and a tiny piece in "Golden Flavours". It reads: "Contrary to certain adventurous opinions, our School motto has little reference to frustrated, sinful domino players.

Its conception can be traced to 1918 (sixty-four years ago). It was owing to a garbled telegram, from Mr McBrair to Mr J.F. Ward, that the badge became its characteristic form. Both the College motto and the colours were left to Mr ward's discretion; however the Reverend Bacon was probably an influence in its design, according to Dr McKenzie's recollection of the badge's existence. He confessed he had accepted the badge, colours and motto as having always been there.

'It all fits so well with the two personalities, Bacon and Ward Ward was a classicist, hence the Latin; both were great Bible students, hence the 'All vain without the Lord'. The open book and the cross of St Andrew seems predictable.' The name of the College and the motto are officially inscribed on scrolls above and below the central shield respectively.

Latin mottos were popular, probably because they were associated with classical learning or perhaps because Latin is a very succinct communicator. Literally, Sine Domino Frustra reads

'Without – Lord – in vain'. 'Sine' is the preposition 'without', governing in the ablative case 'domino' from 'dominus' meaning 'lord' or 'master' and 'frustra' is an adverb meaning 'in vain'.

Then, this excerpt is from E.A. Francis' Editorial for the October 1926 Magazine.

"..... In wider life then, let us ever strive to remember the ideals of our Schools, and you of Thornburgh and Blackheath, make of your motto something more than a line stamped underneath a badge as a mere matter of form. It is only three Latin words, pregnant with meaning – 'Without the Lord, all is in vain'.

Remember this and remember your School.... " These students, one from long ago and one more recent have said all that needs to be said and have done it with such pride that I felt that I did not need to add anything more.

Kris Anderson
1968 – 1974
BPSA Secretary

THE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN

The Memorial Fountain, dedicated and unveiled on the 19th April, 1947, stands "In proud and grateful memory of our Thornburgh boys who fell in the World War 1939-1945 " and who fell in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. It marks the site of the old fig tree.

The fig tree, by the time Thornburgh College was born, was a veritable giant and it was under the kindly protection of it's branches that the first class assembled-out –doors because of the raging influenza epidemic; a handful of boys, the forerunners of the many who were to establish and build on the "Blue" tradition.

There was a tragic time when it seemed that the Colleges, born of the unlimited faith of a good man, were to close, a fearful anticlimax. It was under that friendly tree that the men from the South sat, and heard the singing of the boys in Assembly, and made their decision. The Colleges would remain and increase.

Then came the Second World War. So many of the boys – and girls- who had played and laughed around the tree, or (while in Junior School) had lined up in the shade of the tree at the beginning of classes in the morning, after break, after lunch, and waited for the teacher to give the command to march to the classrooms, joined up and fought and served, some of them captured, some wounded, and some killed in action. It was under the fig tree that one Friday afternoon during the war the girl boarders assembled to hear the Principal Dr. McKenzie announce that the Australian

Army would be taking over the Blackheath premises in Stubley Street and that the girls, before Monday, would be moving to reside at Thornburgh. (A move that did not occur; for during the weekend came the official announcement that no more schools were to be taken over.)

As the School mourned the loss of it's sons, it became apparent that the days of the old tree, were also numbered. Finally there remained only a tall stump. Now the Fountain marks the site of the tree, and bears the names of the Thornburgh boys who were killed in World War 11, in the Korean War, and in the Vietnam War. Each Anzac Day and each Reunion, a service is held before it, the names of the fallen are read out, and young plants that will grow and give pleasure in the Grounds, are laid upon it.



The restored Memorial Fountain.



The fig tree seen here on the far right.



The Memorial Fountain, circa June 1969. School Captains Duncan Pratt and Sandra Shepperson lay wreaths during the Memorial Fountain Reunion Service.

AUGUST REUNION WEEKEND, 2019

FRIDAY, 16/8/19

12.00 MIDDAY-REGISTRATION. PAYMENT FOR ALL BPSA 100 YEARS ACTIVITIES MUST BE PRE-PAID. NO PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED OVER THE WEEKEND. BOOKINGS ARE A MUST AND FINAL. REGISTRATION COST.....\$15.00

3.00 PM PAST STUDENT CHOIR PRACTICE IN THE HALL.

5.30PM P&F ANNUAL FAIR. PLEASE SUPPORT THE SCHOOL BY ATTENDING. PURCHASE YOUR EVENING MEAL FROM THE FAIR FOOD VENDORS.

8.30 PM FIRE WORKS

7.30 PM MEET AND GREET.

ENTRY INTO THE MEET AND GREET WILL BE BY WEARING YOUR LANYARD AND NAME CARD, RECEIVED AT REGISTRATION.

BONUS! THERE WILL BE ENTERTAINMENT, IN THE FORM OF AN OLD BOYS' AND OLD GIRLS' CONCERT, IN AMONGST THE TALKING AND DRINKING. PUT YOUR THINKING CAPS ON NOW AND PREPARE YOUR ITEM.

SATURDAY, 17/8/19

8.30 AM BROWSE THE ARCHIVES IN THE BPSA MUSEUM UPSTAIRS IN THORNBURGH HOUSE.

GO SHOPPING AT THE POP UP SHOP FOR SOUVENIRS, ON THE FRONT VERANDAH OF THORNBURGH HOUSE.

FOLLOW THE WALKING TRAIL WITH HISTORICAL INTEREST POINTS AROUND THE COLLEGE GROUNDS.

9.00 AM PAST STUDENT CHOIR PRACTICE IN THE HALL.

9.30 AM SIGN-ON FOR NETBALLERS AND FOOTBALLERS IN THE UNDER COVER AREA.

10.00 AM DEDICATION OF THORNBURGH HOUSE. (CHOIR ITEM)

12.00 MIDDAY - LUNCH IN AND AROUND THE DINING ROOM.....COST \$10.00

2.00 PM NETBALL GAME PAST STUDENTS VS PRESENT IN UNDER COVER AREA.

3.00 PM PAST STUDENT CHOIR PRACTICE IN THE HALL.

3.30 PM FOOTBALL MATCH PAST STUDENTS VS. PRESENT ON DAM OVAL.

SUNDAY 18/8/19

9.00 AM MEMORIAL SERVICE.

9.45 AM CHURCH SERVICE IN HALL, AND WALL OF ACHIEVEMENT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED. (CHOIR ITEM).

10.45 AM COMMEMORATIVE PHOTOGRAPH.

11.00 AM MORNING TEA.....COST \$15.00

11.30 AM BPSA A.G.M.

TOTAL COST FOR BPSA ACTIVITIES IS \$40.00; TO BE PAID IN ADVANCE. PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE BY CHEQUE /MONEY ORDER and posted to: The Honorary Secretary/Treasurer, Blackthorn Past Students Association, Inc., PO Box 110, Charters Towers, 4820.

OR

If you prefer to pay electronically, email your booking details to bpsa@btc.qld.edu.au and Direct Debit to WESTPAC; BSB 034 170; Account 111315; with reference Surname and years at BTC. This info will also be on an insert.

QUERIES CAN BE DIRECTED TO: bpsa@btc.qld.edu.com.au

Please tick the box, or indicate in your booking email, if you will be at the Meet & Greet, even though no pre payment is necessary.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BPSA; AND/OR DONATIONS TO, WILL BE ON A SEPARATE INSERT, AND WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED BEFORE THE AUGUST REUNION. THESE MAY BE PAID DIRECTLY INTO OUR BANK ACCOUNT, OR BY CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER.

(DETAILS WILL BE ON AN INSERT BEHIND THE REUNION BOOKING FORM).

ARE YOU A GAMBLIN' MAN OR WOMAN? THEN THE FORTY-FIVE CLUB IS FOR YOU

The Odds are better than a Scratchie; and better than Lotto.

This is how it will work.

We need 45 people (that's all), to put up \$45 and we will allot them a number between 1 and 45.

Each week 1 person will recoup \$50; and on the 10th week the prize will be \$100.

We will use the OZ Lotto draw on Tuesday nights, and the 2nd supplementary number will be our winning number for each week.

You will be notified if you win, and a cheque can be posted to you; or deposited into your bank account, which ever you prefer.

If we can keep getting 45 participants, either repeat or new, and we keep it going for 50 weeks, without a break, we have the potential to increase our bank balance by in excess of \$7,000 in a year; which enables us to keep posting you your newsletters.

If you are interested please email missjmissj@hotmail.com

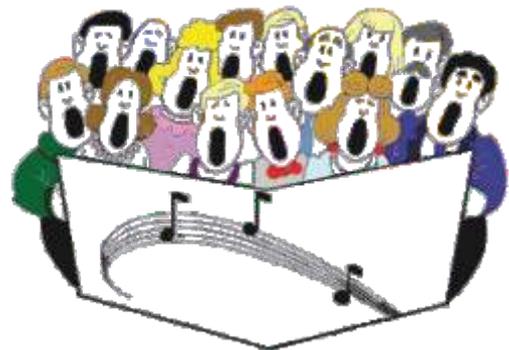
This venture will be run in strict accordance of the rules of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulations of Qld.

MUSEUM/ ARCHIVE RAFFLE

DRAWN 18/8/19

TWO PRIZE DRAW - LINEN PACKAGE /
HIS & HER WATCHES

Proceeds will purchase furniture for the Museum and Archive Rooms in Thornburgh House. Please contact us on bpsa@btc.qld.edu.au if you can buy or sell books of tickets(\$20 a book of 10). We will post them to you.



PAST STUDENTS' CHOIR FOR AUGUST REUNION

I would love to hear from all interested singers. If you have been speaking to me about joining, please can you also email me missjmissj@hotmail.com so I can send you your 3 pieces of music to learn at home before you get to Charters Towers.

2019 North West Queensland flood event

As a Blackthorn past student, you would be hard pressed to not have a classmate affected by the North West Queensland flood event of 2019.

When the rain started falling in late January, most people were elated. However seemingly overnight, the joy dissipated as the reality of the disaster took hold. It's estimated over 650,000 stock were lost and 10,000 kilometres of fencing destroyed after years' worth of rain fell in just a few days. There's been enormous damage to infrastructure including roads, machinery and of course the emotional and financial toll on families and businesses. While it's impossible to list all our past students and their experiences, following are some short stories from the event.

Kylie Stewart-Moore (nee Francis) is at Dunluce, 40km from Hughenden. Their family had the northern quarter of their property submerged by the Flinders River. Kylie says the losses to their business has been huge.

"About a quarter of the hospital cases recovered and while that doesn't sound great, we would have persevered even if they only had five or 10 percent because those cattle had been through the wringer and you just want to do everything in your power to help them," Kylie said. "We had huge support from our team here at Dunluce and family and friends who came to help. We are very grateful for our community and support from further afield."

Rebecca Gunther (nee Matthews) works for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries based out of Richmond. She was a powerhouse during the event, not only co-ordinating fodder drops, but mobilising her local mother's group to make sure all the pilots and volunteers were well fed.

Karena Leake (nee Davidson) owns the Julia Creek Hardware shop and while her family suffered stock losses and property damage, she's also aware of the affect on small businesses, and the wider community.

"We have been thrown into uncharted territory and there will be no fast or easy way to get back to normal or where we were prior to this event," she said.

"We will continue to use our hope and positivity, friendship and usual checking in with our mates and neighbours to keep us going one day at a time. Just because we have a positive attitude don't think for a minute we are not hurting. It is real, confronting and hard but we choose to be strengthened, not flattened by this disaster. Our positive outlook will never be a liability - it is the glue that holds me and our family, friends, neighbours and community together."

Jack and Harry Terry were part of the huge number of helicopter pilots doing extraordinary work taking property owners and managers around to assess damage and help with fodder drops.

While there aren't many 'good news stories' to come out of the flood, there have been a number of people and volunteers going above and beyond to help friends and strangers get back on their feet. As well as a number of charities and organisations on the ground, people outside the area have been more than generous. School friends of Max and Cameron Batt at Nuken, Winton trucked their bulldozers, loaders and excavators from Springsure and Emerald to help the Batts and their neighbours to bury their dead stock.

Farmers in central Queensland donated 7,000 litres of diesel towards the effort.

"When you hear the stories of people losing up to 75 per cent of their stock, their fences, everything, we just wanted to give them a hand," friend, Matt Travers said.

But from all accounts, the best thing you can do to support your friends and family in this area is to give them a call, offer to caretake a property for a weekend so they can get a break, and to keep visiting the communities—buy a meal at the pub, or some boots from the shop in the main street.



David Batt and Matt Travers give a hand after the floods.

A Townsville past student's experiences of the February, 2019 flood in Aitkenvale

On Saturday, 2nd February (2019), we were out in the street, along with most of the people in the street, looking at the water at the bottom of the street; and had decided that we would be ok, and staying. On Sunday the Army delivered sandbags, and my husband and I spent the day sand bagging around our house.

By Sunday evening (3/2/19) though, we were getting text messages about the Dam floodgates being fully opened at 8 pm; and the water was coming up our street rapidly. So, we moved both our cars, a 4x4 and a Corolla to a neighbour's drive because they were higher than us. Then we walked around to a friends' high set house, not far away. The water was then up to the top of my legs; but then I am short.

The next morning, my husband went back to our house, and broomed out the mud and dirty water as it receded, which meant it wasn't so hard to clean up properly in the next few days. The carpets all had to be pulled up though. We didn't have any personal items destroyed, like a lot of people did; and we only had to throw away some pieces of furniture.

My car's electrics had got wet, so it was written off, but the 4x4 was fine. My car was replaced with one the same, even the same colour, but with less kilometres; which was sourced from Brisbane after the Insurance Company had given me a pay out to which we added a couple of thousand dollars.

We cleaned up the house, and moved back in a week; knowing that there were repairs to be done once the Insurance Company had assessed the damage.

Eight big blower fans were put into the house to dry the walls; and we had all the Aircons on too; but when we started getting headaches, we thought they may have been caused from the mould growing in the Aircons, so we turned them off, even though it was very, very hot. (one week was 44 degrees C).

So we stayed in our house until we found a house to rent—not easy, because so many were also in need of a rental.

We have only just (end of April) moved to the house we found, and have taken a 6 month lease; because it may take that long for the Insurance Company to get everything sorted out. We should be able to have a local builder of our choice; and then it may take the builder about 4 to 5 months to complete the repairs.

We were the lucky ones- people in other suburbs were far worse off. We also had lots of support from our neighborhood, for which we are extremely grateful.

Mini Reunions Round-up

PORT MORESBY - CROWN HOTEL, 13TH APRIL, 2019

An Email arrived from PNG. It said—" Dear Mr. Fairbairn, We, the Past Students of BTC would like to know when and if you are coming up to Port Moresby to do the Annual College Awareness? Sir Phillip Bouraga, Sir Charles Lepani, myself (Maisie Snijders (nee Spiller), and others would like to meet you prior to the forthcoming Centenary Celebrations in June. Three of the Achievement Award, Sir Phillip, Sir Charles, and Lenga Jozingao's children will be coming for the Celebrations."

So Mr. Fairbairn did go to Port Moresby, to see the Past Students on 13th April, 2019, at the Crown Hotel. We don't have any details as yet; but I'm sure Maisie will provide some; so expect some and some pics in the 2020 Blackthorn News.

Maisie did divulge some stories from around her time in the fifties at BTC, one involving Miss Landsberg, bearing in mind she, (Miss Landsberg), was a young woman not yet 30; so of course she may have got up to some high jinks with a couple of boy friends; one of whom, her niece recalls, she nearly married.

TOWNSVILLE MORNING TEA MINI REUNION-1/5/19.



This annual event was held at Carlyle Gardens again, and was attended by 44 Past Students and partners, and the Principal, Nigel Fairbairn, and his PA, Kerry Bignall. The "sixties" contingent is getting larger, and Margot Nimmo (nee Clarke) approached them to gain support for the yearly Trophy Cleaning trip to Charters Towers. There were 2 Oldest Past Students, Mrs Norma Hecht (nee MacAlpine), and Mr. Bill Flynn, both extremely spritely for their 90 plus years. Mr. Fairbairn presented them with Centenary badges; and is pictured here with them and Paula Renouf (nee Skelley), who is chair of the Townsville Past Student Group.

Mrs. Rob, who is immensely proud of her Honorary BPSA membership, led the best War Cry! Money raised at this morning tea is the last installment towards the refurbishment of the Memorial Fountain, which was re-dedicated on April 24th 2019.

FAR NORTH OLD MINI REUNION - 28/4/19

The FNQ Mini Reunion was organized by two marvelous Past Blackheath girls, Sue Fairley (nee Wright) and Elspeth Turner (nee Forbes); and it was held at Sue's beautiful property on the banks of Lake Tinaroo, near Yungaburra.

59 Past Students and Partners braved the cool rainy weather, which did clear up once everyone had arrived, and it just meant that we were all on the big wide verandah of Sue's daughter's house, overlooking the lake, instead of down right beside the water as Sue had hoped. We talked, had lots to eat choosing from a delicious home cooked spread, looked at memorabilia, and were entertained by Les Dougherty on his trumpet, accompanied by Graham Smith on keyboard.

There was quite a bit of interest in the past student Choir for the August Reunion.

They asked for a donation of \$5 per person and then donated it all to the BPSA.

At least 2 past students have requested that maiden names be added to the women on the Wall of Achievement. This could be a good project for the Blackheath Centenary in 2020.

The oldest past student there was Jean Smith (nee Wallace, yes Norm's Sister).



MACKAY MINI REUNION - 28/4/19

The sounds of talk and laughter rang out from the Function Room of the Shamrock Hotel on Sunday morning, 28th April. Organized by Ian Richie, who was astounded and pleased with the response of 58, made up from Past Students, partners, an ex teacher, and 3 guests, one of which was Nigel Fairbairn, the College Principal, who turned up for morning tea, and about 12 staying for lunch. Ian attributed it's success to the fact that it is Thornburgh's Centenary, and that Mackay hadn't had a reunion since 2003. The youngest Past Student was Meryn Dunn - 2009-2010; and the oldest was Desley Dahl (nee Martin) - 1942-1945.

Two more good things to come out of this get together, were we now have 33 more email addresses, very important for our communication, and that everyone was in favour of repeating it, especially as next year is Blackheath's Centenary.



FUTURE MINI REUNIONS

Saturday 7th September - Sunshine Coast Annual Mini Reunion Lunch.

11.30 am at Buderim Tavern, Burnett St., Buderim. Contact: Doug Patterson - 07 54 917703 or Jocelyn Gould (Mann) - jocelyngould@qldnet.com.au - 07 54 767007

No dates yet but keep a look out on Facebook for:

Darwin - Contact: Barry Darben - darbenz@bigpond.net.au - 0415 795 557

Rockhampton - Contact: Lenore Cook (Carrington) - Lenorecook1@bigpond.com - 0447 974 999