

BLACKTHORN NEWS

SECOND EDITION, 2020 AUGUST 2020, VOL. 41



President of the BPSA, David Cummins, regretfully had to write this letter after the Management Committee made the difficult decision to postpone the Remembering Blackheath Reunion weekend, for 2020.

Reunion 2020 and 'Remembering Blackheath'

Since the College's Centenary celebrations in 2019, the BPSA has been planning to celebrate this year's Reunion in August 2020 with the theme of 'Remembering Blackheath'.

Since earlier this year, the Committee has also been monitoring the position in relation to the Coronavirus and delayed making a decision about Reunion until its' June meeting.

In light of all the circumstances, at its' monthly meeting on the 30th June 2020, the Committee determined that the celebration of 'Remembering Blackheath' be postponed to a more appropriate time in 2021 and that this year's Annual Reunion be cancelled.

In place of Reunion 2020, the Committee instead encourages and supports the holding of cohort, regional reunions and get-togethers of past students and that an appropriate time for holding these may be around the 9th October 2020, particularly given that the first day of school at Blackheath was the 1st October 1920.

Past students requiring further information or proposing to hold such an event are encouraged to contact the BPSA by email.

The Committee, at the same meeting, also confirmed that the Association's Annual General Meeting will still be conducted on Saturday the 15th August 2020. Members will be provided with all necessary information about the AGM, including arrangements for participation and voting.

We can all look forward to better times in 2021 and the opportunities to 'Remember Blackheath'.

Go it Blue!

David Cummins
President BPSA

SOME OF THE COMMENTS FROM THE FACEBOOK POST OF DAVID'S LETTER ON 30TH JUNE, 2020.

The only reasonable thing you could do. Sad, but that's life. B- - - r!

Exactly!

I hope we have a Gatsby celebration in 21. Already got my outfit.

I guess the 2021, 20 year reunion will be bigger and better now. Happy to share with the class of 2000.

Thankyou, It is a wise decision. 101 years calls for an even greater celebration! Go It Blue!



But...October 9th, (Friday) is the date to celebrate in smaller groups, in 3 States and 1 Territory.

At 11.00 am on Friday 9th October, 2020, there will be an Assembly acknowledging Commemoration Day, at the College.

The Principal and the Marketing Manager envisage a Zoom hook-up at this time, to all Mini Reunion sites/ venues in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Mackay, Proserpine/ Bowen, Ingham, Cairns/Tableland, Richmond, Darwin, and Charters Towers.

The Organizers of each Mini Reunion will decide the format of each function, and notify their district.

However, don't wait to be notified. Make contact with your Organizer from the list below.

MELBOURNE: Roz Bangs (Landsberg) - 0438 570 114; rozberg6@gmail.com

BRISBANE: Judith Lawrie (Pratt) - 0438 335 314; judith.lawrie@gmail.com

SUNSHINE COAST: Jocelyn Gould (Mann) - 1429 938 377; jocelyngould@qldnet.com.au ; Doug Patterson- 07 54917703; catepatterson@bigpond.com.au

MACKAY: Ian Ritchie - 0418 781 645; ianritchie2019@gmail.com

PROSERPINE / BOWEN: Lyndall Hughes - 07 49452060; rphug@bigpond.net.au

INGHAM: Jeanie Schifffilitti (Venables)- 0408 980 751; schif@bigpond.com ; Roslyn Beale (Hecht) - 0407 588 528; paulbeale3@bigpond.com

CAIRNS / TABLELAND: Robyn Bradley - (Hyatt) 0407 024 922; rjbradley17@bigpond.com

RICHMOND: Natalie Maxwell (Larkin) - 0448 422 704; nataliemaxwell2@bigpond.com

DARWIN: Barry Darben - 08 8927 7732; darbenz@bigpond.net.au

CHARTERS TOWERS: Jay Goodwin(Landsberg); 0408 779 199; bpsa@btc.qld.edu.au

YOU CAN HELP!

By encouraging past students you know to become financial members of the BPSA so they can be kept up to date with what is going on.

REMEMBERING BLACKHEATH NON CONTACT PROJECTS.



WALL OF ACHIEVEMENT.

This is a major project in the Remembering Blackheath 2020 year. All of the brass plaques of the women on the Wall of Achievement are in the process of being changed to include their maiden names, the names they were known by when they attended the College.

The cost is in excess of two and half thousand dollars. Thankyou to the Far North Mini Reunion for their donation of \$225 towards this project.



OIL PAINTING OF YELVERTOFT.

A very large painting, 100cm x 80cm, of the original Blackheath building has been commissioned to be done by a well known Townsville artist, Lyn Mott.

Lyn is a teacher of art in Townsville, sells her paintings in a local gallery, and, she says, her claim to fame is that she has an oil hanging in Government House in Brisbane. Her roots are in western Queensland, and she has been painting for a long time.

This painting will hang in the front room of Thornburgh House, which is called the Blackheath Room. This project is costing \$900.

PHOTO COLLECTION.

Libby Atkinson (Bartlett) has volunteered to make a collection personal, casual, photos of scenes of life at Blackheath on Stubley Street. The emphasis here is "personal", not "official", (like the ones in the magazines).

If you have some photos, with names (even staff's) and dates, please scan preferably in jpeg, and email to libbyatk@gmail.com

If this is too daunting, then you can post them to: Libby Atkinson, Maroochy River Park, 218/1 Diura Street, Maroochy, Qld., 4558.

THE THORNBURGH FARM

In the Blackthorn News Centenary Edition, last year, we asked for information on the Farm. We did get a response, from none other but a past principal, Mr. Frank Millett. Here is the letter he wrote to us.

The first (or at least an early) manager of the farm was a young man from Belfast, Fred Bunting. After completing studies in Agriculture, he had come to Australia to gain experience, first in the Beaudesert region. My understanding was that he arrived in Charters Towers in 1930 which seems to coincide with the foundation of the farm. Fred was soon joined by his younger sister, Jeannie, at the age of 17, presumably to be his house-keeper.

Fred was quite musical and he and Jeannie soon became part of the social gathering of like-minded people on a Saturday night singing around the Baby Grand piano in the front lounge of the home of Richard Henry (Harry) and Ettie Millett in Plant Street. The Milletts had four children, Rom, Ken, Frank and Renee, all of whom attended Blackheath and Thornburgh. Harry was also involved with the colleges in a voluntary capacity teaching fitness and various sporting activities. Harry's father Richard Henry (Dick) had been employed as a gardener by EHT Plant prior to the property being purchased by Rev RE Bacon and was also on the Board of the college at one stage I believe.

(In due course, Ken and Jeannie, formed a romantic relationship, became engaged and later married in December 1935 in Townsville on the day Jeannie arrived back from a two-year stay back in Belfast!)

Back to the farm. It appears that when Fred Bunting decided to go back to Belfast Ken Millett took over the management of the farm and later purchased it from the college. He operated it as a dairy farm supplying fresh milk to Charters Towers, delivered by horse and cart. However, drought and poor suitability for dairying forced him to sell in the late 40's. The buyer used it as a base for livestock transport and much later it disappeared as the area was opened up for residential purposes.

The third-born child for Jean and Ken was Frank Millett (me) who started his teaching career at Thornburgh College in 1962 and later returned as Principal in August 1973.

During those early formative years, I was surrounded by evidence of what RE Bacon had established – the well down by the creek from which the water supply was pumped up to an elevated tank, the dairy itself and also the remnants of the piggery as well as framed photos of champion jersey cows. I also loved looking through the Blackthorn magazines of the 1920's and early 30's that my father had kept. What I am intrigued by is the concrete barn known to us growing up as the "tobacco barn". It makes me wonder whether the farm not only supplied produce but also kept the boarders happy with home-grown tobacco!

Frank Millett

The photos below would have been taken in the early 40's. Note the vegie patch in front of the house. The 44-gallon drum in the foreground was used for liquid fertiliser – cow poo in water. The small cottage to the right of the house was occupied during a period in war-time by Ken's sister Renee and her children, evacuated from Ingham. The concrete building in the left background is the "tobacco barn", used towards the end of our time there to house supplementary feed for the cows and against which I developed some early tennis skills.



Farm buildings, Dalrymple Road, Charters Towers 1940s.



Farmhouse at Dalrymple Rd., Charters Towers 1940s - Ken & Jeannie's home.

CLEAN HANDS, 1.5 METRES, STAY SAFE, LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

MUNRO – MARTIN.



Whilst we know quite a lot about the dormitory building at Blackheath, we know very little about the step sisters, Janet Munro and Margaret Martin, who donated the funds for its purchase, relocation, and renovation in 1924.

What we do know:

The Munro farm near Cairns was called "Fairview", and Janet and Margaret probably grew up on it. Later the farmhouse became the "House on the Hill", a well known landmark for receptions; (after it had been the Head Quarters for Z Force in World War 11, responsible for training the brave men who sailed "The Crate", a fishing boat, from Cairns to the Singapore harbour to mine Japanese ships.)

The sisters were also well known in their adult life. The Cairns Regional Council has maintained and recently refurbished a park

named in their honour. The Obelisk situated there has this inscription- "Monument erected in memorial to the caring that these sisters gave to their community and beyond." One of those beyonds was Blackheath.

Through the Cairns Historical Society we have placed an order for 6 photos of Margaret, but unfortunately, they have none of Janet.

A Mr. Munro, in Perth, made contact with the Cairns Council in 2017, on Facebook, and his post indicated that he organized the Munro newsletter. We have no more information than that.

So, we send out a call for help to anyone who has information on Janet Munro and Margaret Martin.

The Blackthorn News in May, 1930, wrote up the farm with pictures, and here is that excerpt.

BEGINNING OF OUR AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

The scheme of establishing an Agricultural Section of Thornburgh College began seven years ago, when, under Council approval, Rev. R. E. Bacon acquired about 130 acres of land suitable for a dairy farm to be managed solely for College supplies. The farm is conveniently situated a short distance from Thornburgh and has a permanent water supply.

The College Council at its last meeting in 1929 adopted the recommendation of the Education Committee that Mr. Bacon during his year as Acting Principal of Thornburgh should arrange class in (a) Principles of Agriculture, (b) Animal Husbandry, (c) Elementary Farm Engineering and (d) Horticulture. Provision has now been made for inclusion of these subjects in the Schedule of Studies for the Junior Public Examination Certificate - endorsed in the Agriculture Section.

Interest of Minister of Agriculture and others.

Recently the Minister Agriculture (Mr. H. F. Walker), visited the farm and expressed pleasure in the hopeful beginnings made. The Professor of Agriculture, through the Registrar of the University has also evidenced personal interest in Thornburgh's latest development and given much appreciated guidance. Mention should be made also of local experienced men who have pledged personal service and financial support in developing the various sections.

Messrs. Vistor and Bramwell Collins, of Spring Creek Station, have particularly helped in a very practical way.

Some Aims of the Promoters of the Agricultural Section.

It must be admitted quite frankly that Charters Towers is not, and probably never will be, a first class dairying and agricultural district. But with an irrigation plant, conservation of fodder, and other up-to-date methods, dairying, mixed farming, poultry, pig raising and fruit growing pursuits can be successfully developed. It is well known that nearly anything will grow around Charters Towers District, but it is necessary to irrigate over the long dry periods.

The Agricultural Section of Thornburgh College, with its necessary irrigation scheme and conservation of fodder methods will fulfil, as years go by the aim of the Promoters in giving that elementary general training to those returning from the College to the various great first class agriculture areas within North Queensland. Also there are many portions in North Queensland similar to Charters Towers and throughout Queensland, for that matter, awaiting the introduction of modern methods and the trained mind in regard to Agricultural pursuits.

The Blackheath and Thornburgh Vegetable Garden.

For nine years the vegetable garden for the two Colleges has been at Blackheath. With the commencement of the College Farm proper at the beginning of 1930 the Council decided to make the Kitchen Garden a part of the College Farm. The supply of fresh vegetables for the total family of Thornburgh and Blackheath, consisting of over 278 persons, is a consideration. It has not only to be viewed in North

Queensland just from a money cost pains of view, but a liberal supply of fresh vegetables means so much as a factor unto health of boarding schools.

The Jersey Herd and Milk Supply.

Practically all the milk required for the two Colleges has been supplied for some years by the College Farm, also some butter, eggs and pork. It would be quite practicable to supply all the butter and eggs required on account of the excellent cold storage facilities in Charters Towers, but for the time being, limited capital is a consideration. Those competent to judge regard the College Grade Jersey Herd as one of the best in North Queensland, and this year, certain friends of the Colleges have made it possible to import from England pure bred stud Jerseys to further build up a Thornburgh Stud Book Herd for the future.

The Thornburgh Stud Piggery.

When the proposal to establish an Agricultural Section of Thornburgh College was represented to the late Mr. W. H. Foote, of "Rackton", Ipswich, he made it financially possible for all his famous Berkshire Stud pigs to be sent to Charters Towers. The picture speaks for the quality of the animals. The Thornburgh Stud Berkshires are probably amongst the very best bred pigs in Australia.

Quite a number of parents have requested that their sons immediately avail themselves of the classes and practical work connected with the College Farm., but the benefits must not be judged by the results of this year or of 1931, but by the general and far reaching influence as years go on, when North Queensland develops - say fifty or a hundred years hence.

Growing Queensland must use more up-to-date agricultural methods in the linking up of her unused resources in land possibilities. With the trained mind much can be done to increase production which surely is a factor of the greatest importance to-day in Queensland.



Thornburgh Jerseys



DO YOU WANT TO GO SHOPPING?



PAST STUDENT BADGE

\$5.00

COFFEE MUG

\$5.00



TEASPOON

\$5.00



TEA TOWEL (Linen)

\$15.00



CALICO SHOPPING BAG

\$5.00



GOLDEN FLAVOURS (Recipes)

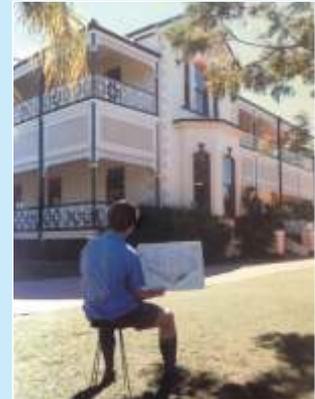
\$5.00



POST CARDS

\$2.00 EACH

Or 6 for \$10.00

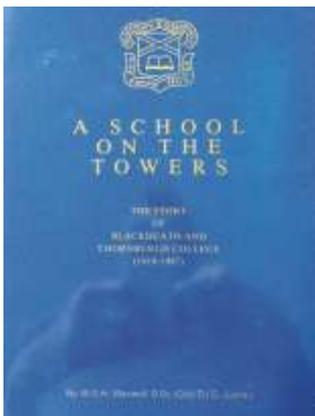


HISTORY BOOK - G. Maxwell

\$10.00

THE BLACKTHORN LEGACY - A. Gibbon & K. Patterson

\$10.00



SET OF 5 PRINTS - A. SAXTON

\$20.00 Or singly for \$5.00

