

# Centennial Celebrations in St Catharine's Hall, 2018

**COOKIE'S CORNER IN THE APRIL EXTRA EDITION OF KINAWAH IN 2017** noted in passing that in that year, it was 99 years since the Church of England Girls School opened its doors at the southern end of Palmerin Street in Warwick. It was also noted that in 2017 it was 91 years since the foundation of Slade. A great deal has come to pass in the few short years since and all of it significant to the heritage of Anglican education in Warwick which is shared by both schools.

Almost as soon as the April Extra Kinawah was despatched the question was asked by Lynne Johnson in the ACT, "Are we going to do something to celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup>?" An informal planning committee immediately put heads together to discuss the feasibility and logistics of staging the occasion in view of the fact it would need to be organised within a relatively short time frame and that the girls' old campus was no longer in existence.

At the AGM in July that year, Warwick Christian College was approached about the possibility of holding the celebration/reunion in the old St Catharine's Hall which had been relocated to Slade years earlier in 1977 and rebranded Slade Hall. With permission kindly granted from the College, the date was inked in as the weekend of October 20-21 in 2018 with the hall duly confirmed as the venue and the catering and unwavering support of the late Kel Williamson for the event assured.

Kel, who had an impressive background in catering had come to Warwick along with Brisbane's Anglican Church Grammar School when it was granted custody of the school premises, 1999-2005, as part of its outdoor education programme. When Churchie withdrew from Warwick, Kel stayed on as loyal guardian and custodian of the Campus throughout the intervening, highly uncertain years before it was acquired to begin operating once again as a school by Warwick Christian College in 2013. He had catered for numerous past student reunion dinners and AGMs so the organising committee knew their celebration would be in good hands.



From this time on, regular monthly meetings were held, and plans rapidly began to take shape.

The history of the school from the time of its 1918 foundation in Warwick is a rather complex one to appreciate, for those who only became part of it during its latter years. In 1937 the Warwick Church of England Girls School merged with Stanthorpe's St Catharine's in College Road and was renamed St Catharine's Church of England Girls School. The Centennial planning committee nevertheless kept in mind that the 2018 celebrations referred back to the 1918 starting point.

In keeping with the motto of the Church of England Girls School, *Altiora in*

*Volvis*, which translates as "seek for that which is higher" a butterfly

motif was decided upon and a logo was designed incorporating an

original pencil drawing of the two storey building which initially

fulfilled the function of classrooms, chapel and living quarters

when the school, first opened. This iconic building dated

back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was variously known as School

House, and White House as well as its original Mie Gunyah

name during its lifetime. This building was sadly destroyed by

fire in 1983 so it held great nostalgic value for those who had

passed through its doors until 1975 at which time the girls moved to

Glennie Heights to board at Slade after the closure of St Catharine's.

Mytton House, also acquired in 1918, is once again a private residence.



The butterfly theme was chosen to symbolise the metamorphosis from adolescence to fledgling womanhood that typically takes place during those formative secondary school years. This also provided plenty of colourful and imaginative decorating options.

A souvenir booklet, *Gone But Not Forgotten*, with the sub title, *A Short History of Anglican Education for Girls in Warwick, Queensland* was also proposed and prepared for publication in readiness for the October festivities. It is still available for purchase for those interested.

Expressions of interest sent out to initial contacts quickly gathered enthusiastic responses from near and far and the "100 girls for 100 years" goal optimistically proposed midway through the planning was eclipsed well before the due date. The contacts base increased rapidly too as word was passed along via Facebook, email, Bush Telegraph and good old-fashioned Girl Talk.

A preliminary afternoon tea at the historic Bull's Head Inn at Drayton on the outskirts of Toowoomba set the tone so that when the October 2018 date finally arrived everyone was in high expectation that a truly memorable time was about to be had by all.

Long lost school fellows from PNG, never thought to be seen again were not left out either. As soon as the word was



out they met Port Moresby and straight away set about fund raising and satisfying all necessary Department of Immigration and Foreign Affairs requirements in order to be present at the celebrations. This was ably motivated and co-ordinated by Vaili Kekedo, known as Vai Sisa during her school days. The girls had outfits specially made to wear which evoked the colours and styling of the familiar old St Catharine's uniform but with distinctive, uniquely beautiful PNG styling which charmed and delighted everyone. The girls stayed together in Eddie Prince House and it was universally agreed that the participation of the PNG contingent made the entire occasion an incredibly special one. Their surprise presentation of a beautifully presented, handcrafted beaten metal picture resplendent with signature Bird of Paradise motif was yet another highlight for everyone.



Back in Warwick, the old St Catharine's hall was decorated to within an inch of its life and evoked a legion of memories for those who had once used it for morning assemblies, public exams, movie nights and the many drama productions which St Catharine's was well known for. On this occasion it was filled with linen covered tables bedecked with runners in brown, silver and navy satin recalling the colours of the striped school ties that used to be worn with white pleated church uniforms for church services, Speech Day and other extra special formal occasions.



The Slade Oval on the other side of Horsman Road was reserved for parking. This was overseen by the men on the SCPSA Committee who also treated those attending to a thoroughly unexpected surprise for the flock of girls in attendance.

This was the unveiling of a smart, brand-new sign for the front of the hall, now signed *Assembly Hall, formerly of St Catharine's*. Not a great deal was verbalised about this gesture on the part of the College and the men at the time as there was so much going on. It was almost too much to take in but this was greatly appreciated and

this concrete reminder helps assuage a lot of feelings of sadness and nostalgia for the old school lost to so many for so long.

Lynne Johnson (St Catharine's 1959-62) the instigator of the original concept, brought so beautifully to fruition on the day, acted as emcee and kept proceedings moving along smoothly and on track.



The day was a truly emotional and enjoyable one with a great spread of ages representing those who had attended St Catharine's during the years of World War II right through to those whose only association with St Catharine's was as Slade girls years later. A beautifully presented and delicious, smorgasbord luncheon was provided and served by Kel and his staff and conversations which

centred on "remember when" moments flowed freely, all accompanied by laughter and even a few tears.

Speeches and formalities were kept simple and heartfelt with a few other noteworthy highlights.

A rolling PowerPoint presentation featuring an extensive range of historic photographs significant to the momentous 100 year history being celebrated ran continuously all day alongside the stage where a diorama featuring various items of memorabilia was also displayed.

Honorary Life Membership was formally conferred on Gloria Coombe (St Catharine's 1943-44) who had been an active member and catalyst for St Catharine's Old Girls' Association and reunion dinners in its early years. Gloria had the honour of cutting the beautifully decorated special commemorative cake. She was joined on the day by several of her school fellows from those years as part of the celebrations.

Additionally, a plaque of appreciation for the much admired, and greatly loved, late Angela Patricia Daniels who taught hundreds of girls Speech and Drama in one of the rooms off the main stage of the hall was unveiled. This was felt to be a fitting tribute both to Sister Angela and for the place of significant cultural importance that the hall was to the school over so many years. Former St Catharine's staff member and fellow of the Community of Sisters and Angela, the now retired Reverend Philippa Wetherell made the flight from Melbourne to join us for the weekend and spoke on behalf of Angela and also on the later Sunday night dinner about her time at the school. She stayed in Roberts House beside the hall with those past students who opted to overnight in the dormitory accommodation still available at the College at that time. It was a little touch of déjà vu for these girls as they chatted companionably together while waiting to take their turn for showers in the big bathroom.

On Sunday morning a healthy contingent attended St Mark's for Morning Services and the weekend drew far too rapidly to a fine finish with the singing of the hymn, *The Day Thou Gavest, Lord is Ended* that evening to close. This hymn was famously sung by Prisoners of War held in the camp near the Three Pagoda Pass in defiance of the Japanese order given to abandon worship by their prisoners in makeshift church areas of the camp.

See also the October/November edition of Kinawah for 2018 for more about the celebrations.

If you would like to order a copy of the special commemorative booklet *Gone But Not Forgotten*, for yourself or as a gift, email your request to [kinawah.editor@gmail.com](mailto:kinawah.editor@gmail.com). Payment details are given below.



#### Angela Patricia Daniels, 1933 - 2015

Sister Angela S.S.A., L.S.D.A., F.T.C.L., taught Speech and Drama here in this room between 1959 and 1968 instilling a lifelong love of Drama Language and Literature in her many students.

She was Sister in Charge of St Catharine's C.E.G.S. 1967 and 1968.

Angela's compassionate leadership as a teacher was a hallmark of her subsequent career in Social Work and profession into the Community of St Francis in England.



## Gone But Not Forgotten...

**PRESERVE THE MEMORIES ✓ ORDER NOW ✓ PURCHASE DETAILS BELOW ✓**

Almost every old girl present at the Centenary Celebrations in Warwick wasted no time in purchasing her own special commemorative souvenir book produced for the occasion. Much of the founding history of the three Anglican schools established in Warwick is shared by both male and female past students and of common interest to all of us. We already have several copies pre-ordered and need only purchaser's name, postal address and payment to dispatch to anyone else who would like one.

**\$15** covers cost of the book plus postage and handling (within Australia).

**INTERNET BANKING TRANSFER INFORMATION IS AS FOLLOWS:**

**BSB 124001 Account No 90641027**

**Account Name SCPSA**

**Reference 100 yr Book plus YOUR NAME**

**PAYMENT VIA AUSTRALIA POST**

Cheques or money orders payable to **SCPSA Inc** Post to **The Treasurer SCPSA, PO Box 1145, Archerfield QLD 4108**

**DIGITAL IMAGES PROJECTED IN THE HALL DURING THE CELEBRATIONS PLUS SELECTED PHOTOS TAKEN ON THE DAY**

Complete set @ **\$12** each may also be ordered and pre-paid by contacting Helen Moloney: [hmoloney@aapt.net.au](mailto:hmoloney@aapt.net.au) (07 46 4635 0573)

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