

North Sydney Boys High School

Primary school completed at Fort Street, most of those of us who lived on the north side of the Harbour ¹, went on to North Sydney Boys High School (NSBHS) which was one of only a handful of selective high schools at the time.² My understanding is that all but one of the 1st Form (now called Year 7) classes were ungraded and essentially equivalent in the distribution of abilities in each ³; I was put into 1B, Hansen Yee into 1A and Greg Frewer⁴ into 1C. As a selective high school we all studied English, Maths, two languages (French and Latin) supplemented in 1st Year by History and a combination of Woodwork and Tech Drawing. I suppose that these last two subjects were to teach us 'bright young boys' some manual capabilities – and indeed they were both interesting and for me at least provided life-long skills that have proved to be of continuing value.



We paraphrased the motto (“He conquers who conquers himself”) to “Wink at those what wink at you”

First Year at NSBHS

All first year classes did the same set of subjects:
English,
Maths,
Science,
History,
French,



Latin, Woodwork and Tech Drawing – the last two were a one-year acknowledgement of the value, if only limited, of 'manual arts' for us 'intellectual' boys in a selective high school.

English: we had Mr. Devir an Irish pie-maker by reputation, whose first name we never knew but he was known throughout the school as 'Luigi'. He continued as my English teacher for five years and by 5th Year we had a well-established 'Legal League of Luigi Lovers'. Whatever others thought of him I found him to be quite mind-numbingly uninspiring and after dissecting 'Macbeth' in 5th Form⁵ for the Leaving Certificate it took seeing 'The Taming of the Shrew' with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in film and then a live production of 'Much Ado about Nothing' in Stratford-on-Avon to rekindle any appreciation of the Bard at all. Poetry was no less boring and I suspect that I did not learn too much about writing prose either.

¹ The OC class at Fort Street was the only one, or one of only two such opportunity classes in Sydney in 1955, consequently the class consisted of pupils from all over the metropolitan area.

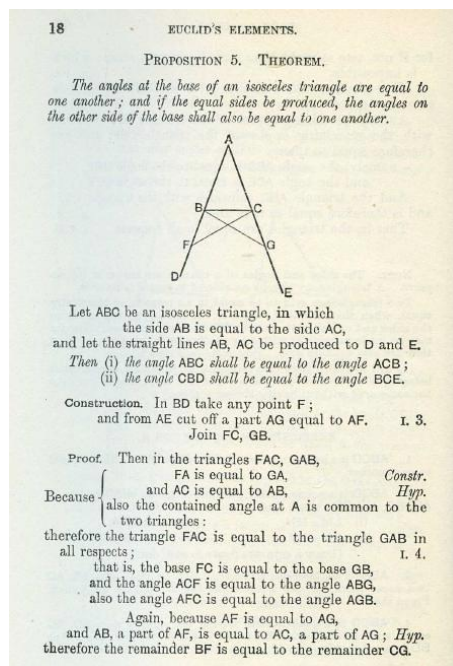
² Other selective high schools were North Sydney Girls High School, Sydney Boys High School and Sydney Girls High School (perhaps Fort Street Boys and Fort Street Girls – certainly not the many that are now scattered over the Sydney Metropolitan Area); my mum been a student in Sydney Girls High in the 1930s.

³ This was confirmed five years later when 87 of us, more than half of our Leaving Certificate Year received Commonwealth Scholarships to go to University.

⁴ Although Greg had not been in the OC class at Fort Street Primary he lived close by in Mosman and we often played together in the long hot summer holidays; he was later to be the Best Man at Helen and my wedding.

⁵ One highlight in our study of 'Macbeth' was attending a live performance in the Cremorne Orpheum with the North Sydney Girls students – Macbeth's little son was played by an elfin girl and when asked by Lady Macbeth "How then shall you live" she responded "I shall live as the birds mother" which caused hilarious uproar, such was the quality of the play and our humour in 1961.

Maths: in 1st Form I had ‘George’ (real name Gordon) Cummings. He was old, or so we thought, probably in his 50s or 60s but not as old as Greg’s Maths teacher ‘Pop’ Shearman who was known as a ‘retread’ who was patched up and brought back into service after retirement. ‘George’ introduced me to Euclid through learning to set out and reproduce all of his proofs and the start of a life-long love of Geometry of any type, classical, coordinate, even the non-Euclidean geometries used in General Relativity. I remember him telling us, with hand gesticulation, to put the ‘data’ in one half of our brain and then use the other half to work out the solution or proof. – he used exactly the same method eight years later when I went to a demonstration lesson at NSBHS during my study of Maths Method at Sydney Teachers’ College.



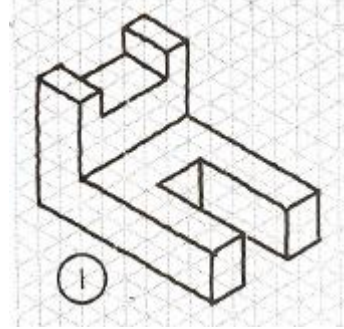
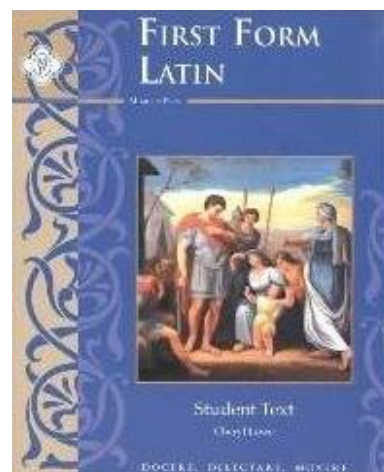
Science: my Science teacher in this first year of high school was Bill Butts.⁶ I have vague recollections of doing basic Chemistry experiments like seeing magnesium burst spontaneously into flame by simply inserting it into a narrow stream of oxygen emitted from another reaction; also of rather tedious gravimetric experiments in which we measured the density of lead shot by weighing them dry and then immersed in

History: our class History teacher in 1st Form was an unfortunate first-year-out teacher ‘Misty’ McDonald. I recall nothing of what we studied then but do recall we peppered the ceiling with ‘goz-balls’, chewed up pieces of paper projected upwards from bent rulers; also that we would methodically take off our suit jackets one at a time down and up successive columns of desks and the similarly put them back on once the last person had taken his off. Poor ‘Misty’ either quit teaching or was transferred after just one year at NSBHS – we were a cruel lot of little boys. At the end of 1st Year I was promoted to the three-language class and replaced History with German for the rest of my high school studies.



French: our French teacher in 1B was Nancy Claire Deans, in 1957 a lone woman teacher in NSBHS given the nickname of ‘Chocolaty Claire’. She had the rather disconcerting habit of leaning behind the teacher’s desk at the front of the room with her arms folded so as to accentuate her rather ample bosom and this earned her the reputation of being “a small ship with a lot of sail” – very imaginative us 1st Year boys! Nevertheless she earned the affection of those who continued with her in French to the Leaving Certificate and many maintained contact with her for many years after leaving school.

Latin: Col Bowser was my Latin teacher in 1st Year; he had the rather nasty habit of grabbing recalcitrant boys by the hair, lifting them out of their seat and shaking them rather violently; this was most often Tony Carson who arguably deserved some discipline if not so brutal – they were indeed different times in 1957. Who can forget, I still have not fully forgotten reciting verb conjugations and noun declensions: in the present tense first conjugation “amo, amas amat, amamus, amatis, amant” (I love; you singular love; he, she, it loves; we love; you plural love; and they love) and so on through another five tenses: future, past perfect, past imperfect, future perfect and pluperfect. One really good outcome of this, and no doubt one reason why Latin was included in our curriculum, was that we learned and understood the subtleties of tense for verbs, as well as the difference between



Col Bowser was lecturing Science Method at Sydney Teachers’ College and he was similarly occupied at the time in the forefront of innovative teacher training with, for example, students being engaged for later analysis and discussion and having school placements one day a week through a two or three week blocks.

active and passive voice, and case for nouns so that when we wrote in English we 'got it right'.

Woodwork and Tech Drawing: I have absolutely no recall of who taught us in these two 'manual arts' but do know that in Woodwork I learned how to use correctly planes, chisels, tenon saws and so on; and in Tech Drawing how to draw plans and elevations, isometric projections and perspective drawings. All of these were very useful skills particularly when we were first married and I was building things around our new house; and of course many years later when Helen's dad built for us the house at Penderlea on the Alpine Way. Being an academic school it was obviously thought that just one year of these subjects was enough and they were not to be continued into later years, even as electives as far as I can recall.

Sport and Physical Education: we all played House sport every Wednesday afternoon and I was put in Harvey House and given a navy blue football Guernsey for the compulsory Rugby Union in the winter season. I remember thinking – probably not at the time, but certainly later – that my head was too valuable to have it placed into a scrum (I think I was playing lock) so I had only one year of being a 'rugger bugger', thankfully. The summer season was of course dedicated to cricket which I enjoyed but never played with anywhere near the skill my dad had – I never could get the hang of seeing a ball coming off the wicket and much preferred baseball where I could hit it 'on the full'. As I had



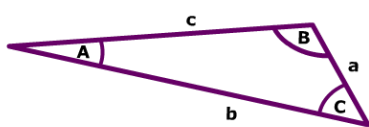
no particular athletic or gymnastic talent PE was for me rather tedious and my only memory of these classes is of being rather terrified as I had to leap over a vaulting horse and be caught by the PE teacher to avoid serious injury – all of this on the small rifle range we had at the back of the Southern Quadrangle next to the school tennis courts.

Second and Third Years at NSBHS

I have combined 2nd and 3rd Years because they culminated in the Intermediate Certificate and I had the same teacher in each subject over these two years. As already mentioned I was advanced to the three-language class and took up German in place of History; not regretted at the time but in retrospect rather a pity as I very much enjoy history now – although continuing it into 2nd Year may have blighted this as happened with the study of Shakespeare and poetry.

English: 'Luigi' was allocated to the three language class, I am not sure on what basis he was given the top academic class; I continued to be largely disinterested but must have learned something about writing well as these memoirs bear witness to.

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$$\frac{a}{\sin(A)} = \frac{b}{\sin(B)} = \frac{c}{\sin(C)}$$

Maths: we now had Ray Garnsey, affectionately – not – known as 'Guts', a nice alliteration. We did not like him much as he seemed perpetually cranky, a state I later concluded was because he was at the time quite ill. I have no memory of the topics we covered except I suppose it must have been more geometry, an introduction to trigonometry with the sine and cosine rules, and algebra in which we learned amongst other things the mysteries of solving quadratic equations; so my learning in Maths continued and it was probably during these years that it grew to be my favourite subject.

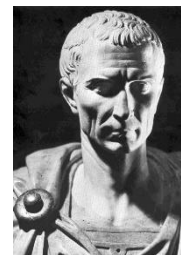
Science: a Mr. Gent became our new Science teacher and he was soon given a number of appropriate nicknames such as "Deter-Gent" or "Intelli-gent", a practice that I seem to remember that he encouraged. In the first three years of high school at NSBHS the Science subject, being combined Physics and Chemistry, included no



Biology or Geology that I can remember. I cannot recall any of the specific details of what we studied but assume it must have been then that I was introduced to the rudiments of Galilean Kinematics and Newtonian Dynamics, got a taste for Classical Physics and a reasonable knowledge of basic Chemistry.

French: Nancy continued to teach us and with no clear memory I suppose I continued to learn more vocabulary while reading simple French novels. She had a strong commitment to social justice being active in Amnesty international and when she died in 2012 she had requested that instead of flowers at her funeral, people should make a donation to this organisation.

Latin: in the three-language class we had a new teacher 'Eric' Baume – we never knew his real first name but his namesake was a well-known personality in the early days of TV in Australia. My only memory of the teacher is that he was a rather large man who sat at the front of the class with his elbows the teacher's desk displaying very large and hairy forearms; we did study *Caesar in Alexandria* to improve our Latin syntax after learning grammar through memorizing multiple conjugations of verbs and declensions of nouns. In this we learned all about ancient Roman siege engines and battleships, and how they were deployed in battles; unfortunately nothing about the love affairs between Cleopatra, a 21 year-old, and Caesar, a 50 year-old, and her preference for Mark Antony.



German: our teacher in the newly taken up language was Alex McAndrew who gave to us all German names and to himself the non-German moniker of 'McAndrosky'. My new German name was obviously Pferdfeld, a transliteration of Horsfield, as Equusager had been in Latin and Chevalchamp in French.

Alex⁷ was a cheerful and friendly teacher so that, even though I found German more difficult than either French or Latin, I chose to continue with it for my Leaving Certificate.

Sport and Physical Education: I continued to play House cricket in the summer and in 2nd Year changed to soccer for winter sport – a much safer game for one's head and possible brain damage from concussion.⁸ PE of course continued and I showed the same level of (non-)enthusiasm for this – when I later married Helen, a PE teacher, I obviously took a more active interest in this part of the school curriculum. By that time PE, at least for the girls Helen taught, seemed much more interesting as they did rhythmic gymnastics as well as the standard gymnastics.

In the 1950s we did not have buses provided to get us to and from Wednesday afternoon House sport; so we walked from the school in Falcon Street down to either Primrose Park or Tunks Park, each about one and a half kilometres from the school. There is a steep descent from Miller Street down to and ascent up from both waterside parks but fortunately we had to carry only our own bags and gear.



Primrose Park, a very pleasant spot by the waters of Middle Harbour, but quite a walk from the school in Falcon Street

⁷ A decade later when Helen and I had moved to Putney I was walking along Pellisier Road and spied Alex on the roof of the house on the corner of De Lange Road; he was doing repairs to his mother's house and we got talking. He had just written a short history of Putney called "Struggle Town" recalling its early days as a working class suburb before it became the much desired 'Prestigious Putney' it is now in 2016.

⁸ Now over half a century later there is convincing evidence that fellows who played serious Rugby (Union or League) and experienced heavy tackling with concussion experienced observable brain damage and sometimes this contributed to symptoms of dementia.

Cadets: being eligible in the year they turned fourteen very many of the boys joined the school's Cadet Unit; for me this was in 3rd Year as I was one of the youngest in my year. Those who were old enough joined in 2nd Year and then in 3rd Year joined a specialty platoon; these were: a Signals platoon, a Machine Gun platoon and a Light Howitzer platoon.

In 1958, less than fifteen years after the Second World War School Cadets was well accepted as many of our parents had served in the Armed Forces and the debacle of the Vietnam War was yet to come. At the end of 3rd Year I had joined quite a number of other fellows in going to an NCO course conducted by the school's own teacher officers at Studley Park. My only memory of this is Captain Bottomley, one of the English teachers and a tall grey-headed man, holding captive a young local urchin (or so he appeared) firmly between his knees while calmly standing in front of us and lecturing on field-craft – the unfortunate young boy had mischievously crept up behind 'Bot' and poked his head out between his legs. We were of course hardly able to contain our mirth.

Corporal Horsfield ready for the first parade in 1960 in old summer khaki drill



As a result of my results in the course I was promoted to Corporal, and in 4th Year put in charge of a section in one of the recruit platoons in C Company.⁹ There are some general memories of my first two years in the cadets: one was the amazing fact that we were permitted to take our rifles home on the bus with us – but with the bolt in our suitcase! Another was the awful tasting water at the Singleton Army Camp where we spent over a week each year – the only relief for me was eating apples or having orange cordial added to it to mask the taste

Fourth and Fifth Years at NSBHS

I have also combined 4th and 5th Years because they culminated in the Leaving Certificate which I sat in 1961 and we all did the subjects we had chosen in both years.

English: as already indicated 'Luigi' continued as my teacher as he was allocated the Maths Honours class, arguably because we were probably never going to be really interested in English anyway. In addition to my already mentioned dislike of the way he treated 'Macbeth' we studied two novels over the two years: in 4th Year it was 'Wuthering Heights' which failed to interest me at all and in 5th Year it was 'Man of Property', one of the Forsythe Saga series of novels. Evidently tis also failed to raise my interest and Luigi advised me "Read every tenth page Horsfield, you'll get the gist of the story". I did this and amazingly managed to pass the English exam and earn enough marks to win a Commonwealth Scholarship.

Maths: by this time Maths was undoubtedly my favourite subject and I chose to do the Honours course in both Maths I (Algebra and Calculus) and Maths II (Geometry and Trigonometry). In both we completed the Pass work in 4th Year so that the whole of 5th Year could be devoted to the respective Honours syllabuses. The Maths I course was taken by 'Guts' Garnsey and surprisingly he earned our respect by so obviously working very hard in preparing to teach us rather difficult and advanced Mathematics; in this we used the first of Jim Coroneos' textbooks.¹⁰ The Maths II class, a smaller

De Moivre's Theorem

$$(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)^n = \cos n\theta + i \sin n\theta$$

for all positive integers n

this extends to:

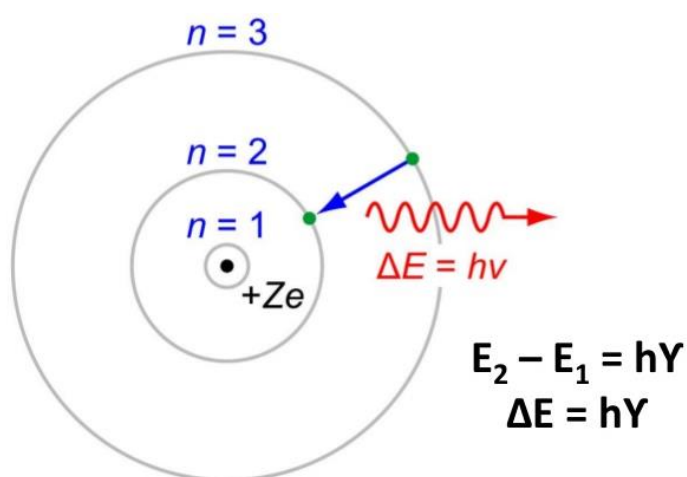
$$[r(\cos \theta + i \sin \theta)]^n = r^n (\cos n\theta + i \sin n\theta)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{e.g. (i) } (1-i)^5 &= \left[\sqrt{2} \operatorname{cis} \left(-\frac{\pi}{4} \right) \right]^5 & |z| = \sqrt{1^2 + (-1)^2} & \arg z = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{-1}{1} \right) \\ &= \left[\sqrt{2} \operatorname{cis} \left(-\frac{\pi}{4} \right) \right]^5 & = \sqrt{2} & = -\frac{\pi}{4} \\ &= (\sqrt{2})^5 \operatorname{cis} \left(-\frac{5\pi}{4} \right) & & \end{aligned}$$

⁹ The NSBHS cadet unit at the time had over 300 students in it and these were organised into three companies: A Company with three specialist platoons, B Company with three platoons a mix of specialist and recruit and C Company with four recruit platoons. As a section leader I was responsible for teaching the younger boys in the section basic weaponry with the old .303 Lee Enfield rifles we had, drill and, when in camp, field-craft. There were fifteen Cadet Under Officers (CUOs), one commanding each of the three companies and each platoon, one quartermaster and another in charge of first aid.

¹⁰ Jim Coroneos' later textbooks for Senior Maths courses went on to be used in almost every NSW school; he self-published them and so must have retired in comfort.

group, was taken by Greg ('Charlie') Brown who was a better teacher as he led us through the detail of conic sections and other advanced Geometry and Trigonometry. At my request he loaned me an additional text wholly devoted to Coordinate Geometry which I worked through "for sheer enjoyment".

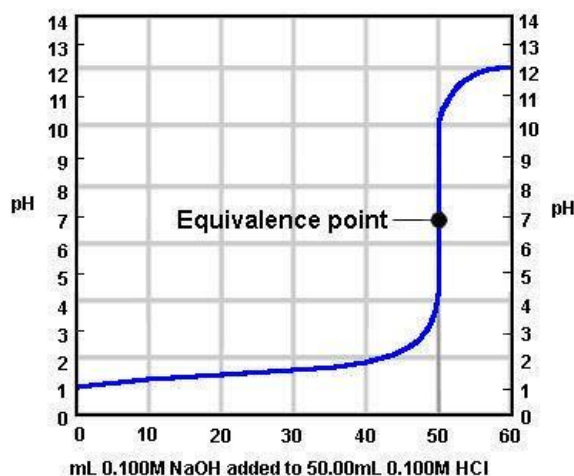


Physics: quite naturally I chose to do two Sciences in the senior School and of these Physics was my favourite so much so that I sat in on the Physics Honours course – again "for sheer enjoyment" with no intention to sit the Honours paper; nor would I have been permitted to sit three Honours subjects. Our teacher was Ken Moulton, an interesting and capable Physicist with an MSc, a rare qualification for a teacher at the time. I have several quite clear memories of his classes: one was his evident excitement, and so our own excitement, as he introduced us to the atomic electron energy levels of the Bohr atom and then telling us that Physicists suspected that

there were similar energy levels within the atomic nucleus itself; a second was seeing black and white films presenting Newton's Laws – rather dull but they were permanently imprinted in my brain ("A body will remain at rest or in uniform motion unless or ..."); and the third was the great fun we had in doing experimental work. In this I learned well the fundamental process of experimentation: Aim, Method, Results and Conclusion with all being carefully and accurately recorded; fortunately my lab partner was a musician with a fine ear who could tell when our weighted vibrating wire was exactly the same frequency of each tuning fork as we calculated the speed of sound in the wire.

Chemistry: unfortunately my experience of Chemistry in the last two years was not as good as that of Physics. In 4th Year our teacher was the coach of the First XV Rugby team and much of the lesson seemed to be spent discussing this with one or two team members who were in the class. In 5th Year we had a new fellow who had come from a Tech College and was not at all inspiring as we seemed only to rote learn chemical formulas and equations without gaining much understanding, but we did learn experimental skills.

Nevertheless I must have absorbed a lot of chemical knowledge – admittedly rote-learned without much understanding; this no doubt proved helpful in my later work as I am still able to recall the solubility rules: "All chlorides are soluble except silver, lead and mercurous; all sulphates ..."



von defen ohnarmüdeten Ecyfer in Vertheidigung der hochfürstl. Brandenb. Befugnüße zeugende Schrifften auf das vorthailhaftigste beandten Herrn Verfaßer in der im Jahr 1764. in 8vo edirten. und nachher in gegenwärtigem Jahr 1774. vermehrter herausgegebenen so betitulten historischen und rechtlichen Beleuchtung der Enopfsischen Land-Charte von Nürnberg geschehen, deme die im Jahr 1766. im Nahmen beeder hochfürstl. Häuser Brandenb. Culmb. und Onolzbach in fol. durch den Druck beandnt gemachte also rubricirte: gründliche Anzeige, wie fälschlich, zum gesuchten Nachtheil der Gerechtsame

'McAndrosky' continued as our teacher as we learned to read in Gothic Script and tackled classical German

German: for some unknown reason¹¹ I chose to continue with German rather than either French or Latin in both of which I consistently gained higher marks. Still the German class was very small, only a handful of us and all in the top group of students except one who continually struggled to keep up. Mr.

¹¹ I suspect it had something to do with me thinking that German was a more 'scientific' language than French. In any case it proved to be marginally more useful than French, or Latin, might have proven to be after school – in 1990 with Helen on Long Service Leave I managed a stilted conversation with a German lady on Frankfurt Railway Station near midnight.

literature as well as preparing for the oral and aural tests that were part of the Leaving Certificate language examination.

Sport: thankfully there was no PE in the senior school but we continued to play sport. I chose to stay in the House competition in both cricket and soccer as I was fully occupied with baseball every Saturday – pitching for Mosman A Grade in the Northern Suburbs competition in the afternoon and coaching or umpiring the juniors in the morning. I was one of a handful of non-athletes who attended the Annual Athletics Carnival and consequently one of a handful who did not get the cane as the Sports Master and two other teachers worked their way through 150 students.

We continued to play cricket down at Tunks Park; and we continued to walk down from the school. The rather bulky kits were driven down there by Mr. Lamerton, appropriately known as ‘Cake’, the teacher who marked our attendance but made no pretence of coaching or even supervising us – he spent pleasant afternoons reading in his old Holden.



Looking back to the historic Northbridge Suspension Bridge from Tunks Park, very much as I remember it from 1960 and 1961; it was a steep climb back up to the road where we usually took a bus back to Falcon Street after an afternoon of energetic cricket

Cadets: a specific memory from the end of 1960 is that for the Passing-out Parade for the 5th Year cadets at the end of 1960 I was put in command of the 4th Year contingent and clearly recall after me having given an order to turn in file having Major Henry (‘Ish’) call out “Leave them as they are Corporal!”

After a year as an NCO I was sent with fifteen others in 4th year to Singleton to do the Cadet Under Officer (CUO) training course. On the first parade back at school in 1961 all of us fifteen CUOs were lined up at the front of the ten platoons in three companies in the main quadrangle waiting for ‘Ish’ to read out our appointments for the year. To my utter astonishment I was put in command of A Company with three specialist platoon commanders under me, even though (because?) I had done no specialist training before promotion to Corporal; in fact I was made the senior cadet of the unit at the age of fifteen. Unfortunately Ish retired as the CO of the unit and we had a new teacher in charge which turned out to be a little chaotic, but we boys had been well taught to run the unit quite autonomously so it all went well, both during the weekly parades and at annual camp – apart from nearly everyone coming down with ‘the runs’ that year in Singleton camp, all being cured by feeding everyone custard tablets to clog them up.

The highlight of the cadet year for me was commanding a Guard of Honour at Victoria Barracks for the annual presentation of medals and awards to Regular Army personnel.¹² I chose Greg Frewer to be the Colour Sergeant and Neil Lowndes as the other CUO in the guard and we did many weeks of drill practice on grass over at North Sydney Park and then the final parade (on grass) at the



↑ The Guard of Honour being inspected on parade at Victoria Barracks; Richard with ceremonial sword escorting the Colonel

← Hours and hours of drill practice on grass in North Sydney Park

¹² NSBHS was given the honour because Colonel McCausland, a close friend of the school, was a former cadet instead of the usual private school units.

Barracks.

I remember how hot it was in full battledress and hoping I would not faint as the presentations went on for what seemed a very long time.



Other events in 5th Year at NSBHS

There were a number of memorable, if not honorable events in our final year in NSBHS. The first was a series of smoke bombs that periodically exploded in one of the quadrangles¹³ – much to the annoyance of the Headmaster and his Deputy. The apogee came one day when the whole school was turned out in the main quad and the Headmaster was

declaiming passionately against the spate of smoke bombs when a large bomb went off in the small verandah above him and bright red smoke drifted slowly across the assembled school.

Another was when Tony Carson, who had managed to get into NSBHS and then persevere into 5th Year, picked a fight with Arthur Streeter. So as to control this ridiculous event it was arranged (mainly by me I recall) that the fight should take place over in the park away from the school; in the event most of 5th Year turned out to form a raucous ring of boys around the two combatants; one purpose of which was to keep prying eyes away from a thoroughly stupid and distasteful activity quite unworthy of the school. I am not sure if anyone wanted either to win, nor whether anyone did in fact win – I only dimly recall that Arthur suffered a bleeding nose and that I assisted him.

Other activities during my time at NSBHS from 1957 to 1961

Of course life was much more than going to school, even if that dominated my time and thoughts particularly in the senior years. Activities included playing baseball, beginning fellowship at Scots Kirk PFA and one crazy bushwalk with Peter Dickens and some of his friends; a few sentences about each.

Playing baseball for Mosman

Sometime around 1957 (1st Year at NSBHS) Mosman Baseball Club formed a team to play in the Sydney-wide Little League competition. There were two divisions of eight teams playing over the winter season with every team named after a team in the American Major League, our team was the Orioles and I was selected to play third base and relief pitcher.

Our coach was Ron Macbeth and we spent many Sunday mornings learning fielding and batting skills down at Reid Park on Mosman Bay under his patient and expert advice – repeated drills of getting our feet and glove in the right places to field ground balls and feet and hands to bunt the ball slowly into the infield all laid the foundation for many years of playing in the future.

Games were on Saturday mornings at either Mosman Oval or Balgowlah Oval; we played with a smaller ball on a



¹³ I found out the culprit two years later. The picturesque Reid Park bench spaces alphabetically, Holmes, HOPE (young, the daughter of Marge Holt in whose lingerie shop my mum had worked for a short time, and who was also a friend of Helen's through Crusaders in their respective private girls' schools) and Horsfield on one bench. It was Holmes who as the trusted Chemistry monitor had unfettered access to the school's store of chemicals.

smaller field than were used in the senior competition, which made pitching easier.

One exciting time in the Little League was when the Orioles, as winner of our division, were chosen with the Lane Cove Indians, winners of the other division were chosen to play the curtain raiser a baseball game between the Australian title-winning Claxton Shield baseball team and a team of prominent cricketer-baseballers one Sunday afternoon at Petersham Oval. In the cricketer-baseballers' team Les Favell was catcher with Test batsmen Neil Harvey and Norm O'Neill pitching. The cricketers beat the baseball champions through O'Neill's speedball pitching and I remember that this left the catcher's hand looking like a swollen tomato – despite the benefit of his catcher's mitt.

In our game I started at third base with Chris Wilder ¹⁴ pitching and as each of us came up to bat we were introduced by name and I as the son of former NSW cricketer Gordon Horsfield. We were tied with the Indians until about the sixth innings when they managed to get a fellow on third with one away. For some unknown reason Ron pulled Chris and put me on to pitch; this was the baseball equivalent of a football 'hospital pass' and the squeeze play was on; so when I threw the ball anywhere near the plate the runner was bunted home safely for the Indians to win the game. Still it was a unique opportunity to play in front of a large and appreciative crowd and I did get two safe hits.

Scots Kirk Fellowship

Sometime in 3rd Year I decided to go up to join the PFA fellowship in our local Presbyterian church, Scots Kirk in Belmont Road. I had been to Sunday School there some years before and I realised many years later that Jean Anderson my teacher would have been praying for me; probably the first of many 'whispers of Grace' in my life.

Our minister was the Reverend J Gray Robertson who served from 1941 to 1969 and the quote I recall he used many times in many contexts was "the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small".



Soon after the 1959 Sydney Billy Graham Crusade, a young bkie Bob Myers, who had come to faith at the crusade appeared at fellowship and began to speak about repentance and faith. One evening he saw that I was obviously convicted and, in the expression of the day, quietly led me to the Lord giving me a Navigators' package of Bible verses to commit to memory. Our two bridesmaids, Jo Kennard and Danielle Harman also came to faith through Bob's evangelism. One memory of Bob was him taking me out to a small church somewhere near Sans Souci; this with no helmets and me on the back of his huge Harley Davidson motor bike quite terrified clinging on to him and leaning the wrong way as we careered around twists in the road.

The PFA – the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia – had a balanced 'four square' program of: learning through Bible study, worship, service and social activities. We at Scots Kirk Fellowship did all of these things and it did in fact provide a balanced Christian experience for the members.

A mad bushwalk

Sometime in 1960 an old friend Peter Dickens, who had moved away from Mosman, suggested that I join him and three friends from his new school on a bushwalk. So kitted out in our ex-army cadet gear and canvas back packs we

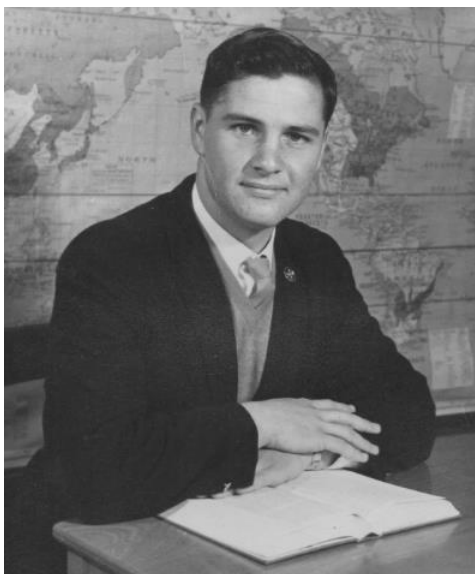


¹⁴ Chris was born in Sydney two months before me in 1945, the son in 1969 and in 1984 he began a bloody, six-week, cross-country leave in his wake a total of eight or nine female murder victims ear

were driven out to the back of the St Ives Showground by my dad and set off into what was then almost virgin bushland.

Primitive maps and no clear plans meant we wandered around the bush around Ku-ring-gai finally emerging on the banks of Cowan Creek opposite the Bobbin Head boatshed. On the way we found some aboriginal rock carvings on a high ridge and at our first night out camping were on a creek with no running water; this last necessitated a crawl up the creek in the dark to find a small dribble to refill our water bottles. When we finally emerged from the bush to see a wide expanse of water between us and where we wanted to be and no obvious way to get across. Fortunately a National Park ranger appeared in a small rowboat and loaded us all in to take us across to the boatshed. Here we found a good sized cave above the shed where we laid out our sleeping bags, lit a fire and cooked our dinner. In the morning we awoke to find tattered spider webs dangling from the cave ceiling above us and wondered what their occupants had done when we smoked them out during the night!

Leaving school



With the leaving Certificate looming preparations were made in the last weeks for leaving school. This involved having our photographs taken in studious poses so we all lined up in the hall to then sit behind a desk with an open book for a serious shot for posterity – for which it is now included.

Another important end-of-school activity, in addition to returning those of our textbooks which were on loan from the school, was our muck-up day. One group hung, more correctly 'hanged', Ish in effigy from the end arch of the Northbridge suspension bridge; another couple of boys donned an elephant costume that was a leftover from our 5th Year Revue and walked out into the main quadrangle. It was evidently a long and trying day for the staff, particularly the Deputy Headmaster, as they were told in no uncertain terms to go out the gate and not think of returning to do their Leaving Certificate exams.

I then spent some time negotiating with the Headmaster, Tom Mason to have them allowed to return to do their exams; in which mediation I was successful.

I think the front legs of the elephant were Tony Friend's but have no idea of who owned the back legs. The amused onlookers include Bob Connell and Hansen Yee, both of whom went on to become professors in their respective fields, Bob in Literature and Hansen in Electrical Engineering.

All of this sorted out we all came back to school and the assembly hall with its 180 or so individual desks to sit for our Leaving Certificate; I personally had eight exams: English, Maths I, Maths I Honours, Maths II, Maths II Honours, Physics, Chemistry and German, as well as an oral / aural in this last.

