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"THE ORIGINS AND FORMATIVE YEARS OF ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE STRATHFIELD."

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A thesis submitted to the University of Sydney in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the pass degree of Master of Education.

1989.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The headmaster who agreed to the writing of such a history, Br O' Shea, gave some initial words of encouragement to the project and provided two hours a week during which some research might be carried out.

Br Bent, the current deputy headmaster, has kept this time in tact as far as humanly possible.

Dr Geoff Sherington, my supervisor, has provided inspiration, encouragement, and scholarship which seemed inexhaustible.

Mr Tony Good, a first day pupil, has given insight, and a gentlemanly forbearance. He is astonishing in both the recall of those days, and in the acceptance he has given to my own efforts to recapture them.

Mr Jim O'Dea, also from those early days, has often contacted me, has written material of great use, and has become like Tony Good, a firm friend.

Br Kent, a survivor from the first staff, and Mr Ted Healey have also sharpened my insights and corrected false impressions.

Stephen Walsh drew the map required, and Adam Taylor the diagrams and Mark Smith took the photographs. Robin Ardill has printed the final copies of the work.
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I.V.

ABSTRACT.

St Patrick's College Strathfield was begun by the Christian Brothers in 1928. The Brothers had come to Australia from Ireland in 1868. They were elementary school teachers. In Australia they moved into secondary schooling. They had no previous experience of secondary education, so they modelled their schools on those they found in the colonies. The common model was the English Public School.

St Patrick's College took on board all the machinery of the Public School but the curriculum reflected the aims of successive headmasters. Its first official headmaster, Br Crowle, toured local convents, offered bursaries, and encouraged boys to stay at school and do the Leaving Certificate. Under the second headmaster, Br Breen, the College fostered games, and joined other Catholic schools in regular competitions. Under the third headmaster, Br Coghlan, uniforms, and public good conduct assumed great importance. The external achievement of success in exams, sport, and appearance became the touchstone by which the school judged itself. Added to this was an emphasis on the devotional side of the Catholic faith. With such
criteria, it was easy to achieve great esprit de corps. By the end of the Second World War the College had established its ideals and reputation.

This thesis thus provides a clear example of what was meant by a Christian Brothers' education. As well, such a study provides a window into the aspirations of the Sydney Catholic community between the wars. Generally Sydney Catholics were a working class community. Many wanted their children to move from the working class. The success of the school depended ultimately upon its social clientele.
There have been many school histories before this one and they provide models to imitate, and also to avoid. A few examples from the field might best illustrate a range of previous approaches.

The most obvious pitfall to be avoided seems to be the worshipful one, which presents the school as some sort of icon. The history of the Marist Brothers at Hunters Hill suggests this devotional approach clearly:

This book...is in many ways a family history. It is written for those who have grown to love St Joseph's College.(1)

Of course, it is laudable to have such an attitude, but there is a danger when an historian so wholeheartedly embraces his institution. It easily leads to defending the institution against critics and seeing such criticism as disloyalty. Br Michael Naughtin does this when he condemns those who suggest the school puts too much emphasis on sport.(2) Perhaps even worse, he is so involved with the character formation that supposedly takes place on the playing fields that he treats the Old Boy casualties of first world war as proof that such valour was learned on the rugby pitch.(3) This work serves as a reminder that objectivity is to be aimed at all times, and that
ardent identification of writer and subject is dangerous. To be fair, Naughtin often displays such detachment, and at those times his work is impressive.

A second shoal to be wary of is the "folksy" account which fails to select items, and offers inconsequential detail without building this into anything other than anecdote. The History of the Christian Brothers at Chatswood, recalls that the first headmaster owned a dog, liked gardening, and could speak his mind. It could be that nothing more substantial has survived than this, but the reader is left with the impression that such information, simply because of its survival, is significant. Now while it may not always be possible to find much detail the historian's task is to exercise judgement, and select what seems of importance. If there is little of worth, then little can be said.

Avoiding such attitudes is not enough. There are many impressive school histories of male schools that offer models worthy of imitation. Mansefield's "Knox",(5) Sherington's "Shore",(6) Blainey's "Wesley"(7) and Denning's "Xavier"(8) all make the school an institution worthy of study. Hopefully this account here will borrow something from each of these.
From Mansfield, some re-enforcement for seeing the reigns of headmasters as the significant periods around which to present the changes in the school. (9) Also his work draws on much the same range of sources. From Sherington, the need to see the school functioning on two levels. That of the staff and that of the students. Geoff Sherington went much more fully and quantitatively into the student side of things than would be possible here, but in doing so, he made it clear that often histories are written only from the headmaster's study and that such a view does not reflect the actualities of life. Boys come from a wider world and return to that wider world each evening or at holiday times. They have interests independent of the school. From Blainey, the genuine excitement of school life, and the drama in sporting victories and defeats that sweep the school along in either enthusiasm or dejection. Such occasions make compelling reading. So too, in Blainey did the tragedy of war and the sad accidents that happen to any group of people. The most controversial of these works is that of Greg Dening. Controversial because he refuses to write a chronological account of the school and instead selects areas which he feels add up to a portrait of 'Xavier'. He writes about buildings, rectors, wars, a Jesuit education, games, preparatory
schools and memories. These are, he believes, the 'rituals...of continuity...that establish a schoolboy's world.'(10). He feels the historian's task is to choose episodes which build a portrait. What is missing in the work is a sense of growth and unfolding, but what is gained is an access to a web of associations that make up the school. As well, Dening uses a prose that is lyrical, and perhaps this is the most haunting aspect of the work. It tends to sweep the reader into quiet raptures at the aptness of its phrasing. This readability seemed so desirable, and yet always just beyond the reach of someone without Dening's gift. However, it served as a model of what was possible. These four works provided inspiration for what is to follow in subsequent chapters.

Clearly the work must be be divided into units, or periods of significant change. The Christian Brothers had a policy of changing their headmasters and personnel frequently. A headmaster was appointed for three years and could be re-appointed for a further three. There was no extension beyond that. The ordinary Brothers were generally moved around more frequently. Because each headmaster had a limited time in the school he often began changes and pushed the development of the school in a particular way.
Consequently it seemed to be appropriate to arrange chapters around each headmaster. They were the units of energy in the school. To understand each of these people, it became apparent that some biographical material was needed to situate them into the school. While all of the headmasters were Christian Brothers, they differed in personality, and in the drive they brought to the school. For some, their period of office was one of the most significant of their lives, for others, it became one more appointment in a career spent largely in control of Christian Brothers' schools. The emphasis on biography implies that the individual headmasters did have a significant shaping influence on the school, and that such an influence was purely personal. The Christian Brothers seemed to depend on individual creativity for any changes in direction. Individual Provincialis in Australia often moved the Order vigorously in particular directions to be followed by more conservative directors who maintained the status quo. So too in St Patrick's. Hence it seems appropriate to organise the work around headmasters, who were left free to maintain or in minor ways re-direct the school.

Despite this, what comes across the desk of the headmaster, and what is recorded in official memos and
publications, does not quite capture the school either. It ignores that other half of the enterprise, the student. There is material in the school magazine dealing with the trials of a schoolboy’s life, but it is never very forthright, or very critical of the processes of education. Consequently, memories and reminiscences have been included. These suffer from the disadvantage of coming long after the actual events, but they give another perspective on the College.

This is not quite the full picture either. The writer of the school history also brings a background that influences the shaping of material. In this case, one who has taught in the school for six years, and one who was a product of a Christian Brothers education, and has had a close association with the Christian Brothers for more than 30 years. Such an association provides both insights and blind spots. It taps into a traditional way of running things and recalling people, yet, it may lack the clarity that comes with being an outsider, and seeing an institution with fresh eyes.

From those who have been in Catholic Schools, there has come a fair amount of literature. This literature, testifies to the fact that other experiences went on
that are not in the official documents. Ron Blair wrote a play about being in a Christian Brothers' school in Sydney in the 1950's. In this play, it is the Brother who is in focus, and who emerges as a hard working, sad shell of a man uncertain about the reality of his vocation. Other writers have pointed to an air of grim suppression noted in the religious who taught them. (12) A Christian Brothers' class room often had an atmosphere of a landmine about to detonate:

I associate celibacy with the threat of violent explosions, administered by a phallus of leather protuding from the black habit at the hip...the remedy for all ills—from unpunctuality to the failure to give the third person passive of a latin verb. It didn't make men of us—it encouraged toughness instead of sensitivity, cunning instead of fear. (13)

Ron Blair has such beatings right through his play. Sometimes being strapped comes up in discussions of the period, but usually there is an assertion that no permanent damage was done. These writers suggest otherwise. As well, there is a questioning of the sort of God who was presented in the schools of these times. (14) He is a withdrawn, stern arbiter of human conduct. Fidelity to his law is the expectation. Morris West who was a Christian Brother during the 1930's and early 40's wrote about the way the Christian Brothers' responded to one who questioned his vocation:
There can be no compromise. Though it break you, body and mind, you must live as you have vowed...pray, so that when the time comes for final profession you may...decide rightly. But remember, if you value your manhood, no compromises.(15)

This no compromising, no showing of weaknesses, seems to come through in the literary portrait of the Brothers. Even in the way they were recalled as playing sport:

At handball the brothers became new beings...shouting and grunting in primitive play, giants wheeling unstoppable round the court, as their great wheeling ham hands thwacked the ball.(16)

All of this is a backdrop to the history of any Christian Brothers' College. It provides a literary portrait of those who taught school as members of the Order. St Patrick's College has had one old boy write about it. Peter Skrznecki wrote a complex poem about some of his boyhood memories and called "St Patrick's College". It begins:

Impressed by the uniforms
Of her employer's sons,
Mother enrolled me at St Pat's
...wanting only what was best.(17)

It deals with the school after the period to be discussed, yet captures the loneliness of one boy, presumably duplicated many times, and hidden in more glossy recollections of schoolboy days. The hardness that Oakley found in another Christian Brothers'
education seems to have been experienced at St Patrick's.

Given their full title, the Christian Brothers were in actual fact, 'The Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ireland'. They were Irish in origin, and though only one headmaster was Irish, it would be expected that St Patrick's College would have been a hot house of those qualities that Patrick O'Farrell suggests belong to the Irish in Australia. He sees:

...independence, lawlessness, stereotypes that were easy-going, anti-hierarchy and authority, generous, fun-loving, boozy, and as game as Ned Kelly.(18)

These were not qualities that readily denoted the atmosphere in a Christian Brothers' school. No author so far referred to recalled his schooldays in these terms. Either O'Farrell is wrong, or the Christian Brothers' had a tradition different from the normal. Perhaps in the making of sporting heroes the school was Irish, but again, all of the schools seem to exalt games' champions so this is not their Irish quality.

But O'Farrell sees the Irish as more than bearers of these qualities. He sees them as:

...the key dynamic factor...in determining the character of Australian life and institutions...the Irish rejected or questioned the system...with the effect of creating a new,
modified system...which fitted the character of a mixed and interacting group of people, on the basis of equity.(19)

He admits that this is 'vague and contentious ground'.(20) Even so, it would be reasonable to think that the study of one school, run by the Irish Christian Brothers in Australia, might uncover some of this dynamism. Or at least show what issues in fact, were important at the school, and the values that were fostered. If a school like St Patrick's did not foster this Irish quality, then perhaps it is in other areas that further research must look.

Tracing through the origins and early years of one school, it is hoped, will shed some light on the question, what did it mean to be educated by the Christian Brothers? It will also provide a case study of a Catholic boys' school between the wars. It will show what were the concerns of such a school, and what were the aspirations of those who sent their sons to St Patrick's College. The study will deal only with the formative years from 1928-45. By this date the patterns had been formed and a recognisable St Patrick's style established.

This thesis will not examine St Patrick's as a Training School for Christian Brothers.(21) That subject could be treated in a separate study on the Christian
Brothers as educators. The school functioned on its own, and had a life independent of its links to the Training College. Such links were rarely adverted to in the school records, and any exploration of them would proceed from a consideration of the Training College rather than from St Patrick's.
Zainu'ddin also sees headmasters as the way to
periodise the history of a school. However, MLC had
only four headmasters in the first ninety-seven years,
whereas St Patrick's was to have more than this up to 1945. 

(10) ibid., preface (no page number) 


(12) C. McCullough, The Thorn Birds, Harper and Row, New York, 1977 (McCullough refers to a nun whose lips were 'compressed into a single line of concentration on the hard business of being a Bride of Christ' p. 23 )

(13) B. Oakley, 'Ready, Set, Go--', Dialogue. Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1969, p. 8

(14) P. Kenna, A Hard God Currency Press, Sydney, 1974, p. 80-1

(15) J. Morris, (Morris West) The Moon in my Pocket, Australiasian Publishing Co, Sydney, (no date given) p. 67-8

(16) Oakley, op. cit., p. 9 (Blair in his play describes handball as a game to be played by the Brothers in time of temptation 'where they could whip the devil'.


(19) ibid., p. 10-11

(20) ibid., p. 19
(21) As will appear later this was the main purpose for which the College was founded.
When St Patrick's College opened its doors in 1928, the school became part of a self-sufficient Catholic community, part of a wider political community that was New South Wales, and part of an education community to which all secondary schools belonged. While it was in the Strathfield area it was never a vital part of the local community. It tapped too many other suburbs to be aligned with one locality.

The Catholic community had its own churches, schools and hospitals. Catholics saw themselves as the only members of the one true Church, and everyone else as outside that true Church. Catholics had been shown God's favour, and they could win for others the same advantages as they possessed. They needed however, to guard themselves against all the forces arraigned against them, and to do this, they made their own Catholic culture a safeguard. It occupied most areas of their lives.

The head of that community in Sydney was Archbishop Michael Kelly. He was an Irishman. Most of the clergy were Irishmen too. Most of the laity, though having Irish ancestors, had been born in Australia. However, they were used to having Irish priests and readily accepted their leadership at this time. (1)
movement of an Australian Clergy ministering to their own people, though upsetting some priests, did not at this stage reach through to any of the laity. The Church was authoritarian. The Archbishop was in charge of his priests, and the priests in charge of the people in their parish. Bishop and priests administered the sacraments, and without the sacraments, no Catholic could expect to reach heaven. It was a powerful means of control.

This control was generally exercised with a velvet glove. If there were any disagreements, they were not brought into the open. As well, the Sydney Church, had in Kelly a public conciliator. He was not out to make trouble in the wider community. Catholics were in parliament, they were in the professions, and the cause was best served by winning quiet long term goals. In 1928, the Sydney Catholic scene was remarkably serene and remained so until the ALP split of 1954.

Archbishop Mannix in Melbourne had built a different tradition. He was all for confrontation and heated disagreement. During the conscription forays, there had been strong Sydney exception taken to the Mannix line of attack. Archbishop Kelly sensing how divisive an issue it was had declared:
...every Catholic was free to express his own personal opinion and live up to it. The priest had no opinions to offer on that subject.(2)

This attitude of not wishing to foment civil discord, was part of being a Catholic in Sydney. It was not just virtue. It sprang also from the experience of being the underprivileged, the 'Catholic poor'. And now that Catholics were beginning to make their mark in the establishment, the less boat-rocking the better.

But, it was not just a desire to make good that motivated the Catholics. They had a sense of superiority, of being more favoured than those who followed other religions. The Catehcism issued under the auspices of Archbishop Kelly had these answers in Lesson 10 on The Church:

What do you mean by the true Church?

The true Church is the society of all the bishops priests and faithful under the one visible head appointed by Christ.(3)

But just in case the children of Sydney were in any doubt as to who could be part of this one true church, the next question was:

Which is the true Church?

The true Church is the Holy Catholic Church.(4)

There it was, no room for uncertainty. Every Catholic child in every Catholic School learned off this answer,
and heard no official reason ever given to contradict this assertion. That was, until Vatican 11. But Vatican 11 was well ahead of these times.

The Catholics built up structures to keep members of this select organisation together and prevent anyone straying into too many non-Catholic paths of dalliance. There was for example, the Catholic Club founded in 1905. At this time it was a social gathering place rather than one where heady debate ensued. In business there were the Knights of the Southern Cross, less than 10 years old in 1928, and particularly strong in Sydney. It was a powerful behind the scenes group which hoped to oppose discrimination against Catholics. At Sydney University the Newman society had begun in the same year as the College, and though never as strong as in Melbourne, it aimed to help students and counter any adverse criticism the Church received. The second headmaster of St Patrick's would later address the society in 1935. Finally there was the medical guild of St Luke founded by Dr Herbert Moran where Catholic doctors could discuss their moral and professional concerns.

Catholics each Sunday could pick up from the Church an astonishing range of weekly newspapers and monthly magazines. These were kept alive because parishioners
were encouraged to be informed about their Church and to be aware of the triumphs and set backs that were occurring throughout the world. (6)

The most popular Catholic literary figure was 'John O'Brien'. In real life he was Father Patrick Hartigan, whose own uncertain temper was at variance with the portrait he offered of sweet natured melancholic parish priests. His 'Around the Boree Log' sold 250,000 copies. John O'Brien left his readers in no doubt that whatever links Catholics had to Rome, they were Australian to the core:

An Australian, ay Australian-oh, the word is music to me,
And the craven who'd deny her would I spurn beneath my feet
...There would flash the living bayonets in the strong hands of my brothers,
And the blood that coursed for nationhood, through all the years of pain,
In the veins of patriot fathers and of Little Irish Mothers
Would be hot as hissing lava streams to thrill the world again. (7)

Christopher Brennan, one other Sydney Catholic writer, captured a sense of Irishness in Australians that was never quite on familiar terms with the British establishment. He had written in 1916:

I am not of your blood;
I never loved your ways:
If e'er your deed was good
I yet was slow to praise. (8)
This however was generally unspoken. It was reflected in the dearth of royal portraits in classrooms of Catholic schools and homes. Yet when it came to dying for the Empire, the Catholics responded, despite the ancestral rebellion in their blood, as fervently as any other group. Brennan and O'Brien point to a tension in the Catholic community. On one hand they felt misjudged and illused by the establishment, on the other, they felt totally Australian. The latter was dominant, but the grievance was always just below the surface.

One way this hostility came to the surface was in Catholic demonstrations of strength. In the years between the war, Catholics publically paraded their religion. In 1928 there was a Eucharistic Congress in Sydney. At its conclusion, three quarters of a million people lined the Sydney streets, loudspeakers played Catholic hymns and a ferry sailed the harbour with an illuminated cross surrounded by boats.(10) St Mary's Cathedral had been opened at the beginning of the Congress, so that the Catholics could worship the power of God so evidently at work in their midst.

Public witness was a part of these years. The Catholic Radio station 2SM had started broadcasting in 1931. On air, Dr Rumble ran a program in which he answered any
THE SETTING

questions put to him about the Catholic Faith. By 1967, his book from "Radio Replies" had sold 7 million copies. The Catholic presence was notable too when the school children paraded on St Patrick's day, as well as when they marched en masse to Church each Friday for the ceremony of Benediction. It was usual for Catholic men to wear the black and white Holy Name badges in their lapels. On Sundays there was a guild of speakers trained to address crowds and defend their faith in the Sydney domain.

When Archbishop Michael Kelly opened St Patrick's as a training school in 1928 it was one more demonstration of Catholic independence and of the commitment to handing on the faith. It proclaimed that the Catholic school system had to survive alone, without state help.

Despite displays of triumphalism, there were some uncertainties within the Catholic community during these years. One of these was a division within the clerical ranks between the Australian born clergy and their Irish born bishops. These Australian priests formed what became known as the Manly Union, which published a magazine, and called for changes to the Church government. This movement was kept within the ranks of the priests.
The laity too had those who expressed dissident views. One of the most outspoken was Dr Herbert Moran the doctor who founded the guild of St Luke. In 1939 he published his experiences as a Catholic Doctor. It was an incendiary work:

The evil in Australian Catholicism may be summed up in this way: there is an alarming percentage of unedifying failures among our clergy. A commercial spirit pervades many of the secular priests and nearly all the nursing orders...Only two duties are assigned to a layman: those of practising his religion and subscribing liberally to the Church.(13)

Moran detailed some of these undeifying failures. The book went to three editions in the first two months. His criticisms obviously made good reading, and suggested that beneath the placid surface of the Sydney Archdiocese, there were pockets of discontent. The Christian Brothers of St Patrick's did not inhabit these frontiers of criticism. They were orthodox, conservative, and their schools fitted well within the bounds of safe Catholic tradition. They did not seek contact with the wider world critical at times of the Catholic culture.

The second community to which the school belonged was New South Wales. It was not quite so settled in its attitude to things Catholic. There was an uneasy
relationship between Catholics and others. The Fuller Government which was in office from 1922 to 1925:

...was militantly Protestant and Anti-catholic...Protestants expected and Catholics feared, that the Government would implement the policies in the Protestant mandate.(14)

That little happened was due to only one term in office and a cautious upper house. Catholics were in the Labor Party. But they were a smaller proportion of the ALP than were the Protestants in the coalition Government, and the parliamentary Catholics were not outstanding either for their own practice of religion or for their hostility to their Protestant colleagues.(15) This Anti-Catholic sentiment faded not by being dealt with, but rather sidelined under the tumult surrounding Jack Lang. His background was nominally Catholic, and a large proportion of his electoral support was also Catholic.(16) Furthermore his opposition was largely middle class Protestant. But, Langism:

...bewildered middle-class and respectable working-class Catholics almost as much as it affected suburban Protestants...he separated a significant proportion of Catholic voters from their traditional Labor adherence.(17)
Something of this bewilderment would have effected the parents of boys at St Patrick's. Lang had stood his own party against the Labor group in the Federal election of 1931 when Lyons won power. Then, despite an apparent supportive crowd of 200,000 in More Park in 1932, his party lost 21 seats in the state poll.\(^{(18)}\)

In the 1935 state election, Lang was opposed by Ben Chifley. Lang polled 57\% of the vote and Chifley 43\%.\(^{(19)}\) Auburn, Lang's electorate was the third largest source of students at this time.\(^{(20)}\) Clearly the people of Auburn were strongly divided about Lang, and such bewilderment must have been discussed in homes or gatherings. It must have been part of the background of St Patrick's. It never surfaced however in any recordable way. The school did not mention the political realities of the area.

The uncertainties between Catholics and Protestants seen on the political hustings occurred at the level of their children too. Name calling and jeering was part of the 1920's:

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Catholics, Catholics ring the bell
While the publics march to hell.\(^{(21)}\)
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And these same 'publics' would respond with their own doggerel. It was this communal hostility that partially explained the Catholic demonstrations of
strength, and yet at the same time, the need to tread softly in their claims for State aid. The position of Catholics was ambiguous. They felt secure in their faith, yet uncertain of their social status and position in the wider world. The education offered at the College did not deal with this uncertainty or try to build any bridges to the non-catholic schools. Sporting contacts were kept within the Catholic system and there was no systematic attempt to solve the ambiguities that existed.

Yet paradoxically, the third community to which the school belonged was that formed by secondary boys' schools. And, the inspiration for these schools was non-Catholic.(22) It was the English Public School of Thomas Arnold. The Christian Brothers came to this model only in Australia and only when they moved into secondary education. They had begun in Ireland in 1802, and had confined themselves to primary schools, with occasional advanced classes. Their first secondary school was in Melbourne in 1871.(23) They took over the Arnoldian practices of prefect systems, old boys associations, pupils divided into houses for the purposes of games, sporting fields at or near the school, school uniforms and blazers, and sporting colours. This system had been educating the leaders in
Society for some time. Such embracing of the corporate model of schooling was not confined to the Christian Brothers. St Bede's Mentone opened in the same period as St Patricks likewise accepted all the mechanics of the independent school, even though it was run by a different Order of Brothers, the French De La Salles. Uniforms, sports colours, playing fields, exam success, and competition with neighbouring schools to prove one's superiority at games. This acceptance of the non-Catholic model of school was not confined to one order or one diocese. It was almost universal. Adopting it perhaps reflected the Catholic need to win a place in society for themselves, and reflected the perception that this was the model which produced year after year those who were leaders in society.

If the Christian Brothers wished their pupils to move into the leadership ranks in society, then this was the way. It also meant that the Brothers, while generally keeping to primary schools had to prepare some of their number, to educate their students to University entrance. Parade, and Ballarat their first two senior schools sat their first pupils for the Matriculation in 1878, ten years after the Brothers had arrived in Australia. The vast majority of their students went into business or public service, they did not go
to University. (27) Slowly, this changed. Eventually in Melbourne there was a central school which took students from all the Brothers schools and prepared them for university entrance. This central school was St Kevin's. (28) There was also some consolidation of senior classes in Brisbane and Adelaide. (29) These central schools did not last, as many of the feeder schools began to take their own students on to the senior years. One consequence of taking senior classes was that some of the Brothers themselves actually attended University part time and took out degrees. However, they never thought of a university education as normal for themselves. Those who were allowed to go were culled and then these men ran courses of study for the rest of the Order. The Christian Brothers kept steadfastly to their own system of training. They had their own Teacher Training College, and until St Patrick's was opened, they sent the young Brothers out to the nearest Christian Brothers' school, for practice teaching. There was an uncertainty then about the Brothers' approach to secondary education. On the one hand they readily embraced the Arnold style English Public School, on the other hand, they did not embrace one prerequisite of this model that the teachers in such a school be University educated.
There was no perception of any uncertainty among the Brothers themselves. They had by 1918, sixty schools, with over fifteen thousand pupils. There was a school opened for each year they had been in Australia. They had over three hundred Brothers and over one hundred assistant masters in these schools. As a result of their energy, the Christian Brothers took their place in the 'Public School' associations in every Australian state except NSW. They certainly could be seen as a significant part of Australian Catholic schooling's establishment. In all that time they had only three men in charge, and two of those ruled for forty seven of the fifty years. They were an Order not used to rapid changes of management. However, in 1921, there arrived in Australia, a man who would become Provincial for only three years, but who would found St Patrick's College.
FOOTNOTES

(1) P. O'Farrell *The Catholic Church and Community*, Revised Ed, NSW University Press, Sydney, 1989, p 355
(In 1901 there were 87% Irish born Clergy and 80% Australian born laity)

(2) *ibid.*, p. 324


(4) *ibid.*, p. 25

(5) O'Farrell *op. cit.*, p. 380


(8) A.R. Chisholm, and J.J. Quinn, (Eds) *The Verse of Christopher Brennan*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1960, p. 180

(9) Campion *op. cit.*, p. 93-4

(10) *ibid.*, p. I35


(12) O'Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 358 ff


(15) ibid., p. 192

(16) ibid., p. 214

(17) ibid., p. 214


(18) ibid., p. 265

(19) ibid., p. 276

(20) See Graph of suburbs of student residence in later chapter.

(21) Hogan, *op. cit.*., p. 201


(23) ibid., (This book give a clear account of the spread of Independent (Corporate) schools in Australia.

(24) ibid., p. 22

THE SETTING

(29) O'Donoghue *op. cit.*, p. 16
He was a tall man with a strong and rather stern face and deep-set blue eyes... The dominant expression of this monk's face was indomitability. He had the steady look in the eyes and the set of the head of the absolutely brave man. But hard and keen though his eyes were, there was in them an expression of kindliness. He had at once the thoughtful and the fighting type of face. (1)

This was Br Patrick Ignatius Hickey, the man who was responsible for the founding of St Patrick's College. The portrait was written long before, while he was still a young Brother in Ireland. But, the lines of character were clear even then. Br Hickey did not arrive in Australia until 1921. He was gone by 1927 before the first sod had even been turned on the site of St Patrick's. Yet in six years, Hickey had revolutionised the organisation of the Christian Brothers in Australia.

Br Patrick Ignatius Hickey wanted, for the Christian Brothers, an empire of schools. He wanted the centre of that empire to be 'Mount Royal,' the stately home the Brothers had occupied at the top of Albert road Strathfield since 1908. In that empire, St Patrick's College was to be the school where young Christian Brothers were taught how to be teachers.

When he came in 1921, Hickey found a large number of schools. But he also saw that the three hundred
Brothers had been only slowly increasing, but not at a fast enough rate for the Order to open many new schools. Hickey decided to reverse that trend. In Mount Saint Mary, the name the Brothers gave to Mt Royal, he saw a novitiate with only a handful of novices. (2) He felt called to reverse this situation. Stage one in his battle plan was to enlist new recruits. With Ignatius the soldier Jesuit as patron, he had a ready model for action. (3) Br Hickey decided that what Australia needed was a Juniorate, a high school for boys who wished to become Christian Brothers. Br Barron, the provincial, demurred at the cost. (4) Hickey answered that he would collect money from every Brothers' school in Australia and that hesitation was a sign of disbelief. His energy carried the day. The building of a Juniorate began and Br Hickey visited classrooms throughout Australia and painted a picture of life as a trainee Brother that sparked a response in boy after boy. At the end of 1921, these youthful aspirants were ready to leave home and begin life as future members of the Order.

Bart Kennedy, an Irish journalist and novelist met Hickey first in 1905. He was awed:

In life one meets very, very few really interesting men. And this monk was one of them.
He might have organised and led a revolution...a man with the suggestion of the terrible in him.(5)

That revolution began with the Juniorate and ended with St Patrick's. When he came to choose a name for his Juniorate, Br Hickey chose a rebellious name, St Enda's. Enda was an Irish scholar saint, the patron of the great missionary school St Columba had founded on Iona in the middle ages. St Enda's was also the name of the school run by Patrick Pearse, the executed leader of the Irish Uprising in 1916.

The thirty boys who arrived in 1922 had similar stories of how they came to be in the Juniorate as fledgling members of the Christian Brothers Order:

He was the most influential man in my life. For half an hour, he spoke to our class when I was a boy and told us what it meant to become a Christian Brother. Brother Hickey decided the direction I was to take.(6)

This boy was to become the eighth headmaster of St Patrick's. At this stage he was just young Jim McGlade.

Others found his summons terse, but still irresistible. "Boy! I want you for God's work. It was as simple as that. You simply obeyed."(7)

Another victim of his spell was a cabinet maker living in Melbourne. He had no idea of joining any religious
THE BACKGROUND: 1921-27

order, but a friend living in the same boarding house, had an appointment to see Br Hickey and asked the carpenter to accompany him as moral support. The first young man demurred. Then the eyes of the revolutionary turned on the cabinet maker,

"And what about you, John," Ignatius Hickey inquired?(8)

Within the week, John left for the novitiate at Strathfield, became Br Pius in religion, and spent only one year away from St Patrick's for the rest of his life. John Rewi Pius Crichton, or to generations of SPC boys simply, 'Crich'.

Not everyone found it easy to reconcile the gap that appeared between the promises held out to them by Br Hickey, and the actual conditions they found on arrival at the Juniorate. Hickey, the visionary and dreamer, spoke of what could be, not of what was. Some felt imposed upon, and reacted with hostility:

The man was an imposter. He told us that in Strathfield there was a swimming pool, a cricket pitch, and horses. He painted a picture of endless days given to games and country living. I arrived to find, no pool, an old horse who pulled a dray round the property, and a sloping paddock, with no wicket, on which we were allowed to play games. I had been conned.(9)
He met with opposition too, from his own Brothers. They felt he had over-reached himself, and that his plans for the Brothers would bring disaster.

"They can't see what is to come," he confessed to one young brother who greeted him as he sat brooding on a bench in the Juniorate. (10)

Brooding was however, seldom his way of dealing with those who did not endorse his plans. Often his reaction was more direct. A Brother with the name of Placidus O'Connor, failed to live up to his name and struck a Juniorate boy who backchatted him. The boy, one of the Hickey conscripts, reported the incident. At the end of the year Placidus found himself replaced by someone with the more favourable name of Br Innocent. (11)

Direct action occurred too, if he felt the Brothers were becoming worldly:

When he found any community needing the hand of reform, he did not hesitate, and no consideration for individuals deterred him from taking the steps he deemed necessary. (12)

But despite such forthrightness, The Australian Province of Brothers, were so impressed with the energy of this tall Irishman, that in 1925 they voted him Provincial, thus giving Hickey even more opportunity to develop his plans. He enlarged the novitiate to take in the boys from the Juniorate, and also began to move
the Brothers into the area of technical schools. He opened one at South Melbourne, another in Adelaide, and two in Sydney at Rozelle and at the already functioning Balmain establishment. When St Patrick's was first thought of at this time, it was to be a technical school as well as a Practicing School, as this was the direction in which Ignatius Hickey wished to steer the Province. (13)

All of this activity took its toll. In 1926 Br Hickey became seriously ill. He was operated on in Lewisham hospital and for some weeks lay on the point of death. Early in 1927 he applied to return to Ireland in the hope his health might improve. Between Adelaide and Perth, he fell into a coma. Then there was a slight improvement, consciousness was regained, but the only result was an insistence that under no circumstances would he leave the ship and be hospitalised in Australia. Perhaps he felt he had trodden on too many toes. Perhaps his sickness could be turned to advantage by leaving a memory of a man who had worked himself to exhaustion.

Before he left Hickey had sent to the Brothers one last letter:

I am compelled by failing health to sever my connections with the Australasian Province.
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...I have received many act of kindness from you...and co-operation in advancing the varied plans you have accepted for a greater Strathfield...the Novitiate now throbs with hope and efficiency...from your splendid practical help that result has come. I have been but the accidental instrument in the hands of Providence.

...There remains one undertaking still unfinished—the new Practice School—the completion of which this year will, under Divine Providence, make Strathfield the glory of the Province. I am sure you will...bring to a successful finish the crowning glory of your central Training College...(14)

That crowning glory was St Patricks' and with its opening, 'greater Strathfield', the empire, would be complete. Hickey, having grown up in the time of the 'Troubles' would have been political enough to know, that the last request of a dying man, could not be refused. By requesting the school as a death wish Hickey ensured its future.

Br Hickey would not die easily, and instead after several months convalescence he recovered sufficient strength to badger the Superior General into allowing him to resume light teaching duties. He went to Prior Park College in Bath, England, and struggled to teach. However, it was unsuccessful as his mind wandered, and he performed unpredictably. Only will power kept him there. At the end of 1927, he again became seriously ill. Still he lingered, until finally death could
not be delayed. Even then, there was no easy submission:

...stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, his hands clenched, his frame tense, he uttered a last, loud, expiring cry. (15)

This was the Patrick Ignatius Hickey who founded what would become St Patrick's, the central Training College, as the final addition to his "greater Strathfield". He saw himself as inspired by God, and success, as proof of the correctness of his inspiration. St Patrick's was his last formal request as Australian Provincial. The Hickey building, the original school of 1928, was named after this man.

The building, the students to be acquired, were all left to someone else. Br Hickey had a dream, but it was up to others to be inspired by that dream and to make it work. It was not to be an easy task.
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FOOTNOTES

(1) *The Christian Brothers' Educational Record, 1928,* (Henceforth CBER) p. 368

(2) *ibid.,* p. 391

(3) *ibid.,* p. 373

(4) *ibid.,* p. 391

(5) *ibid.,* p. 369

(6) Interview with Br. J.A. McGlade. 28.10.86

(7) Interview with S.C. 23.10.86. (Name withheld on request)

(8) *CBER,* Necrology, 1986, p. 430

(9) Interview with Ted Healey. 3.11.86.

(10) Interview with Br. A. I. Keenan Archivist of Christian Brothers in NSW. 30.10.86

(11) *ibid.,*

(12) *CBER,* 1928, p. 393

(13) *ibid.,* p. 393

(14) St Patrick's College House Annals, letter from Br. Hickey, 8.3.1927

(15) *CBER,* 1928, p. 381
Br Hickey left a few problems to be solved.

One was to choose a name for the new establishment. The Christian Brothers were reluctant to assign to public fame one of their own. They courted anonymity. Publications were generally ascribed simply to 'A Christian Brother' rather than any individual. So 'Hickey College' was out of the question. The Provincial Council settled on St Patrick's.

As yet the Irish Christian Brothers had no school in Sydney dedicated to the patron of Ireland. This training school provided such an opportunity. In addition, it would be linked to the Scholasticate where young men were formed as members of the Order. In the Brothers' rule there were two Patrons of the houses of formation, St Joseph and St Patrick. The Scholasticate was already called St Joseph's, and so it was fitting that the Training School should fall to Patrick. (1) The two windows on the sanctuary of the old chapel at Mount Saint Mary were a daily reminder to those who went to mass there that only one of these patrons had so far been honoured. In the southern window, St Patrick had his only tribute, yet it was an isolated spot without even a name attached. Once both saints
were given their due, it was confidently anticipated that blessings would flow and the new school flourish.

The apostle of Ireland took a while to manifest his influence on behalf of the college. For weeks after the building contract was let, not a wall appeared. Instead, workmen from Welch Brothers kept digging as if they would bury everything associated with the school in the hole they were making. Regularly, Jack Hennessey, the architect, would arrive and shake his head. Solid ground had still not been reached. The digging was to continue. It was to be no makeshift building. The firm of Hennessy, Hennessy, Keesing & co. had won the Master Architects Gold Medal in Turin in 1923 with their design for the new chapel at Mt St Mary Strathfield.(2) Already the tower of that chapel dominated the Strathfield landscape, and Fr Maurice O'Reilly, the rector at St John's University college, had linked it to the spires in Oxford, as a colonial symbol of learning.(3) The training school was to be built to match this chapel and so its Italianate Romanesque style was to be sighted to fit the view from the Provincial house. A landscape was being shaped. From its beginnings, St Patrick's was seen by the Brothers as part of their training campus. The crosses on the building were not random Christian
symbols. They were the Iona crosses of St Columba, and they were carved fully, only on the side that could be seen from the road way that ran by the school. This maintained the Hickey idea, that Mt St Mary's was the centre of an empire, and St Patrick's was an integral part of the headquarters, designed to fit in with the other buildings, and face the world that was waiting out there to be converted by the Brothers. From that roadway, there was impressive uniformity.

On Australia day in 1928 St Patrick's was blessed and opened by Archbishop Kelly. He gave official church approval to the Brothers and their training college and assured all:

Religious education let the the sunlight in on secular subjects...the training of teachers was all important...they had to be educated up to the standard of the Leaving Certificate. Those who were going to instruct should be well instructed.(4)

This was vintage Michael Kelly. Bland in sentiment and inoffensive in tone. Still, he was a power in Sydney to have on side, and the Brothers were glad of his support. Br Hanrahan rose to reply. He was in charge of 'greater Strathfield' which meant Mount Saint Mary, and it now included this new school. The St Patrick's community were to live not at St Patrick's but at Mt St Mary and so were under Br Hanrahan's care. It was no
idle matter to be superior of Strathfield. It gave
the occupier a seat on any General Chapter of the Order
in Australia and guaranteed a say in overall policy.
On opening day Br Hanrahan spoke as Superior of
'greater Strathfield', and Brother in charge of
training:

This school was called a Practising School...young
Brothers would have an opportunity of getting
there their first opportunity of teaching in a
school...Everybody regarded a Practicing School as
the essential part of a training College...The
standard would be up to the Leaving Certificate
and there would be technical classes...This school
was for Australasia...it would help...do the
work...for Catholic children throughout the great
Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New
Zealand...Boys would be able to travel free to
this school.(5)

The last line defined a role for the new school that
made it distinctive. In addition to a Teachers
Practicing school, it was to be a technical school for
both boys and Brothers. Because there were few of
these technical schools, boys could travel past other
places, to make use of the technical education to be
offered in St Patrick's. They would receive free rail
passes from the government. So from the outset, St
Patrick's was designed to tap a wider community than
Strathfield, the community along the metropolitan train
lines. The Brothers of Mt St Mary would have long made
use of the fact that all trains stopped at
Strathfield.(6) They were fully aware that while
SUBURBS OF STUDENT RESIDENCE 1928 - 38
SOURCE: SCHOOL REGISTER.
numbers were not guaranteed in the local area, the railway seemed to offer a reasonable chance of a large intake. In fact the railway had always featured largely in the Strathfield consciousness. When real estate agents were subdividing the Redmyre estate (the early name for Strathfield) in the 1880's

...the area's convenience to the station was consistently mentioned...each poster which advertised the sale of an estate had a local sketch of all the main roads near the estate, particularly those that led to the closest railway station.(7)

There was another benefit to opening a school in Strathfield. The suburb also had been presented by estate agents as having:

...a social character distinctly removed from the neighbouring Auburn, Concord, Rookwood, and Homebush...mostly settled by members of the Sydney upper classes, the gentlemen, the professionals, the merchants and other businessmen...Strathfield was advertised...as a first class area (compared to the advertisements of Burwood and Homebush).(8)

St Patrick's College was of Strathfield, not Homebush, and presumably it was hoped that this elitist view of the locals might even help the Brothers to advance their school.

On this day, with Michael Kelly in ceremonial robes, the audience was curiously without local Sydney Christian Brothers. Instead, the lay people, the clergy from adjacent parishes and the young Brothers
from Mt St Mary composed the group. The regular school Brothers were not there. They were still on holiday. (9) The Brothers were allowed by rule 4 weeks at the seaside. This was an Irish custom, where travel involved no great distances. The Australian Province felt this rule did not need any readjustment in the colonies and kept observing it each year. If there was a clash of engagements, the holiday rule won. The speeches over, everyone else was then free to tramp through the ten rooms of the new college.

There was a sense in which the crowd could view themselves as on a holiday excursion. Nearby were the stately homes of Albert road, and yet here was St Patrick's built on the fringes of the civilised world. No dense settlement offered hope of many students nor was there a bus service. There was only the railway. A cart track went by the school entrance, and sheep often stopped to graze before reaching the Flemington stockyards. The school faced scrubland, useful in explaining the parable of the good shepherd but little use else.

Boys would come from nearby schools. Firstly Christian Brothers Burwood, and then from schools along the railway line.
It was a simple and hopeful plan.

Less simple were the arrangements for the Brothers who were to staff the school. They were to live in a house next to the school called Creewood. It was a sloping roofed building dubbed 'the ark'. It looked about as old as the flood, and as if it might well have floated to its present position. The St Patrick's Brothers, while they were to sleep in this building, were to eat at Mt St Mary's, and to be part of the community there. The superior of the Training College, Br Hanrahan, was in charge of the three Brothers. He did not teach in, nor play any part in the day to day happenings of the school.

The man who had much to do with the establishment of St Patrick's, and who carried out the enrolments, was not on the staff either. He was in charge of showing the young brothers how to teach. Master of method, was his official title, but without this he was simply Br Ernest Stanislaus Crowle. The new practicing school would be his to mould.

Br Crowle arrived at the school to take enrolments. So meagre was the flow of applicants, that when Crowle sat down to lunch it was with a long face:
Hardly anyone has come. The thing is a farce, a white elephant. It is not going to work. (10)

The most experienced of the Brothers actually teaching in the school, Br Laserian Carroll, was not impressed either. He had spent the previous seven years in Waverley working with senior students. (11) He was also studying Latin 111 in the final year of his BA, and felt that the ten students whom he entered into his class roll that morning, were not quite the challenge for which he had been preparing himself. The eastern suburbs must have seemed on another planet from this scrubby selection whom he listed as "secondary group" and whose ages ranged from 10 to 15 years. (12) If the school room seemed less than intellectually exciting, Br Carroll could console himself in the greater time that would be available for his university studies. It was not to be.

Meanwhile, there was some maneuvering in Mt St Mary. Br Crowle, who had been in charge of showing the young Brothers how to teach, was appointed to oversee the school. But, after that first morning when so few came to enrol, he lacked interest in the new school. In Br Carroll, he saw a way out of his malaise. He convinced Carroll to take over the running of the school, on a temporary basis, while he went back to the scholastics and sharpened their teaching skills. It
was all unofficial but, Carroll agreed. It cost him dearly. He taught all day, then went into the University after school returning at 10.00pm to drink a cup of milk coffee slump in the chair, and study till 2.00am when he went to bed. He then rose at 5.30am for morning prayers and taught a full day in school. (13)

Study had always been important for Br Carroll. Two years earlier he had lectured a Brother from an opposing school on the football sidelines for not beginning his University studies. The young man being lectured lost both the debate and the football game. (14) On one occasion, he had said night prayers with the community at 9.30 pm, then joined the community again next morning at 6.00am for prayer, having studied all through the night. That day's exam he passed with ease. (15) But this run of success deserted him at Strathfield. At the end of the year he failed his final year of Latin and did not take his degree. Thus, his kindness to Crowle, bore no academic fruit, and it was a setback that he found hard to bear. Later in his life he insisted that Brothers attend University full time whenever possible, and this probably was a result of his own experience. (16)

The other two brothers on the first staff were Br Paschal Kent and, in his second year of teaching, Br
Pius Crichton, whom St Patrick's would know as 'Crich' for the next 50 years.

The first consolation of living in 'the ark' was that it was a relatively unsupervised existence. Life was untroubled. But there were a few drawbacks. They had no cooking facilities. So, for each meal, breakfast, dinner and tea they would walk up to the dining room at Mt St Mary. This was alright in the dry, but wet winter months were irksome. They had no morning or afternoon tea, but there was a glass of warm milk for supper, if you felt like it. Br Kent, who was eventually to design the crest, had a cartoonist's gift, and drew the Ark lashed by rain and wind with three sodden figures heading off to Mt St Mary. The caption he put under it was "If you know of a better 'ole...go to it." One day it disappeared and he found himself summoned by Br Hanrahan and asked to explain why he had left the 'h' out of 'hole'? (18)

There was no mystery about the selection of Br Kent. If ever young Christian Brothers needed someone to model the ideal teacher and community man it was Kent. He was tall and very athletic. So good at handball, that he was frequently summoned by Br Hanrahan to be his partner in a game after school. (19) But he was summoned for another reason too. He had a mellowness
of temper that was exceptional and a twinkling eye that saw the fun and could laugh without rancour. Years after it was this quality that was recalled. He had time for all and yet brought with him a lightness of heart. (20)

The third member of the teaching staff that first year was something unique in the Christian Brothers' world. 'Crich' 10 years earlier had seen action in both Gallipoli and France. He had been a despatch rider.

and he was now standing before this class in St Patrick's because of his experiences in the Somme:

...on one particular occasion when a terrifying barrage suddenly broke out and shrapnel fell all round he took shelter in a bomb crater half filled with mud and winter rains and pledged himself in a special way to God if he escaped alive. (21)

Keeping this pledge, had brought him to the Brothers.

He had not only experience but a fund of anecdote:

I was dispatch rider for for Brigadier Charles Brand (he was on the wharf to meet me on return). This role compelled me to traverse on horse terraine otherwise impassable because of the shell holed ground and Flanders mud. More than once I was caught in a barrage and had to shelter in a crater. I was one of the lucky ones to go through unscathed. (22)

But, the most famous of 'Crich's' claims was that he had been in the field when the Red Baron, Richthofen, had been shot down in April 1918. Often this story would surface, with 'Crich' pointing to the ceiling and
showing the angle the plane had taken as it coughed overhead streaming smoke. Over time, he allowed his presence on the field and the shooting of that red plane to come more and more into alignment. While never actually claiming he pulled the trigger, he never specifically denied that he did not. (23)
Some of the students may have heard the story from 'Crich' during his time at Burwood. Or, perhaps his other favourite of how his horse had bolted, later been found unattended and he had been charged with neglect of duty and fined. (24)
All this was worlds away when the doors were opened on the 30th January, 1928, and thirty-nine fresh faced youngsters confronted three young Brothers for the first day of St Patrick's. They surveyed the boys, and assigned them to classes. Br Kent had fourteen boys in fourth and fifth class, and Br Crichton seventeen boys in first, second and third classes. (25)
There is no record of the selection processes they used, but Br Carroll sent three boys back to grade 5 during the opening months. The other two put up with any misgradings and left things as they were. (26)
On the first day it was not only Brothers and boys. Some carpenters arrived too. Gas pipes had been placed wrongly in each room so that the doors could not open
outward as required by law. Instead of turning the doors around, the workman lowered the floors and not content to leave well enough alone, made the teachers' platforms too high. (27) The result was that any visitor, stumbled on entrance, as the floor was low, then frequently a second time trying to climb on to the high rostrum. (28) This was but the beginning.

The first week of school, the rain pelted down. The walk from Flemington, Homebush and Strathfield stations saw the students arrive like drowned rats only to find that the steep banks between the new college and Mt St Mary had given way and the school was an impasse of mud on the southern side. (29) To the new students this meant bare feet and frolic. To the brothers of St Patrick's, a justification of what many considered to be the extraordinary amount of money spent on the verandahs of this college. (30) But the farce of the first week was not done. The toilet block sloped down from the entrance. The rain not only entered, it filled the cubicles. They were unusable. A local handyman, Mr O'Neil, attacked with chisel and hammer, and the waters eventually subsided. "The boys can now sit in comfort", O'Neil reported to the Brothers. (31)

The names entered in 'Crich's" roll book in that opening week indicated that the school had very
limited appeal. Of the seventeen in his class on the first day, ten came from Strathfield, five from Flemington, and two from Homebush. Crowle's worst fears on the day of enrolment had been realised. This new school looked as if it was going to be a white elephant after all.

The bad weather lasted a week. With the rain over the life in St Patrick's began to fall into a pattern. Nothing survives of what went on in the class room during that first year. However, a Christian Brothers' School never lacked advice, and so there were directions given to the Brothers in their publication *Our Studies* as to how best set out the model school room:

At 9 am

Altar well dusted and decorated with fresh flowers...clock regulated...and in striking order...Rims of ink-wells wiped with damp cloth...home Exercises and Lesson Books for the day ready at hand.

At 3.35 pm

Withered flowers removed from altar. The master's table a model of neatness and order. Interior desks cleaned of bread, paper, etc ... Forms raised to facilitate sweeping. Pupils ready to leave in order assigned to them.(sic) (32)

For that first week, clearly none of this applied. But once the dry weather came, then these were the sorts of things that the Brothers were expected to keep an eye
on. There were too, pages of advice on suitable timetables to be followed for various classes. Each day began with prayers an assembly and inspection and concluded with prayers and dismissal. (33) Pretty well everything in between was covered as well.

Above all there was the half hour of Religious instruction by the Brothers every day. This was specifically mentioned to the Order by Pope Pius VII. (34) The Instruction began with the ringing of the angelus bells at mid-day. The Brothers were encouraged to make these instructions appealing:

Whatever we teach should be closely related to the child's needs and capacities...some truths Our Lord withheld because his hearers were not ready for them...In the same way an Australian missionary when addressing children takes his examples, not so much from the Lives of the Saints, but from the praiseworthy actions of prominent footballers, school boys, and men of the world he has met. (35)

It was also Christian Brothers' practice to say a Hail Mary every hour. The clock chimed, and work stopped for the prayer. This custom had been long established in the Order. Every class room was to have a striking clock and this habit of an hourly Hail Mary was carefully fostered. In 1887, the Superior General of the Brothers reminded the Brothers:

The Hail Mary said at the striking of the clock...trains the children to offer themselves and
their work to Almighty God...I may here remind you of the pause recommended before making the Sign of the Cross...(36)

Not only was the hourly Hail Mary said, but a Litany to Our Lady was said at the end of school each day.(37)

May was a time of particular devotion to the Mother of God in Christian Brothers schools. A special Altar was built and hymns sung each day. Rows of candles and blue lamps burned before the altar which was hung with blue and white drapes. The students grew familiar with the devotional practices of the Brothers. There was a sentimental attachment to this devotion:

...every May the boys...search for flowers...to decorate the altars. I can well remember my school days and the spirit which animated my companions and myself in our search...for primroses, violets...and other wild flowers as offerings to lay on the altar.(38)

The writer of this was the Superior General of the Order, and this was written in 1929, so it was standard practice in all Brothers schools. The boys of St Patrick's would certainly have experienced this in 1928. The next month, June, was for devotion to the Sacred Heart. The lamps went from blue to red, the curtains also changed to red and white and the prayers were addressed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Flowers were still sought, but with less ardour, Mary being more likely to respond to floral arrangements than her Son. Yet, despite embracing the corporate schools
model, there was no chapel at the school. If Mass was to be said, the boys were taken either to the parish church in Strathfield, or on rare occasions to the Chapel at Mt St Mary. It was an atmosphere of devotion that was encouraged at the school. To miss Sunday Mass was unthinkable, so these practices during the week were supplementary, adding emotion to the normally routine forms of worship.

Thursday was a sport's afternoon. From the first year the boys played cricket in the correct attire. If whites were too expensive, then calico could be used. After school, Brs Kent and Crichton would often play sport with the boys. Sport was one of the ways by which they tried to reach a boy's heart. Games were not just a past-time, but a way of preparing for life. They were meant to form character. The Brothers readily embraced this corporate school view at St Patrick's. Perhaps the absence of Br Carroll was noted, but he was at University, every afternoon and the boys would have grown accustomed to his not being there. He was not a sportsman anyway, whereas Br Kent was a fine athlete, and 'Crich' could hold his own. In winter the footballs would come out. For Br Kent, this was a time of prosletysing. He was an Aussie ruler, and the drop kick was a speciality, as were his high
marks. The St Patrick's boys would try to emulate his style, and chafe him about "Aerial Pingpong", and he would respond with comments about football that was played with the hands. These after-school games lingered in the memory of these boys. The implication was that Br Kent offered them friendship without talking down to them. Nor did he seem so dependent on the boys esteem that he craved their company instead of adults. He gave them the impression of a man at ease with himself, who could enjoy their company. He was probably also aware that each time he won a heart, he was in fact following an earlier request to the Brothers from the Superior General:

...we must not conceal from ourselves the dangers to which we may be exposed in our intercourse with the children. Among these dangers is an austere and repulsive manner, which alienates the affections of the children...A person of the character just described, failing to win the hearts of the children, and meeting, not infrequently, with boys of a stubborn will and passionate temper, finds himself...enforcing submission by coercive measures.

Br Kent, never co-ercive, practised what the order held up as ideal:

...that paternal tenderness and solicitude peculiar to God's chosen servants. Compassionate their weaknesses; bear their froward tempers; and be ever ready to forgive, after the example of our Heavenly Father, than to punish the delinquents.
This was the style of man recalled by Anthony Good, and why the kicking of the football after school was important. It was more than letting off steam. Sport became a way of showing affection to those who were not always reached in the classroom. It was the Thomas Arnold approach rather than anything instilled in the Order by its founder Edmund Rice.

The year had sufficient activity to pass quickly. Lessons, prayers, sport, devotions for May and June. The thirty-nine who enrolled had grown to eighty. There seem to have been no sudden rushes of enrolments. (44) The hopes of Br Hickey had not been realised.

That first year there was no end of year concert, nor annual sports carnival. It was a lame finish to an unimpressive first year. The "Crowning Glory of the Province" had proved a lacklustre affair.

The end of the year brought some changes to the Brothers. The disappointed Br Carroll was returned to Waverley. 'Crich' and Br Kent were to remain. The man who had relinquished the position at the beginning of the year, Br Crowle, was returning, with an official letter of appointment as headmaster of the school, and superior of the Brothers. They would now live in the
'Ark'. The days of running to the top house for meals were over. But, St Patrick's was to be administered by a man who had described it after enrolling the first pupils as a white elephant. He would have the new year to change that impression.
FOOTNOTES

(1) Interview with Br. Keenan, 30.10.8

(2) M. Jones, *Oasis in the West Strathfield's First Hundred Years*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p92

(3) Interview with Br. McGlade 9.4.87

(4) CBER, 1929, p. 231

(5) *ibid.*


(8) *ibid.*, p. 69

(9) CBER, 1929, p. 231

(10) Interview with Br. Keenan, 30.10.86

(11) CBER, 1971, p. 144

(12) Original Roll Books.

(13) Notes of Br Kent in author's possession.

(14) CBER, 1971. p. 142

(15) *ibid.*, p. 143

(16) *ibid.*, p. 149

(17) Br Kent *op. cit.*

(18) *ibid.*
(19) Interview with Ted Healey, 9.6.87

(20) ibid.

(21) CBER., 1986, p. 424

(22) ibid., p. 428-9

(23) ibid., p. 429

(24) ibid., p. 429

(25) Original Roll Books

(26) ibid.

(27) Br Kent op. cit.

(28) ibid.

(29) Interview with Tony Good (First Day Pupil) 3.3.87

(30) Br-Kent op. cit.

(31) ibid.

(32) Our Studies, Oct. 1929, p. 6 (Even though this is the next year, this seemed accepted as common practice in the Brothers)

(33) ibid.

(34) Circular Letters of the Superiors' General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ireland (Christian Brothers), (No Publisher is given, but the letters were printed in 1934), (this letter dated, 1882), p. 83

(35) Our Studies, op. cit., p. 6

(36) ibid., p. 93

(37) Ron Blair's, The Christian Brother, concludes with this Litany.
THE FIRST YEAR 1928

(38) Circular Letters of Superiors' General, 1929, p. 427

(39) Interview with Tony Good, 30.10.86

(40) ibid.

(41) ibid.

(42) Circular Letter of Superiors' General, op. cit., p. 15-16

(43) ibid., p. 16

(44) Original Roll Books.
Br Ernest Stanislaus Crowle, the new headmaster, was a very complex man. His Brothers in community found him an almost impossible person to get close to.

He was unbending. Any compromise, either for himself or his staff was regarded as failure. There was never a case for turning a blind eye. He frequently pointed out faults, particularly to the younger Brothers. Nearly every night, there would be some tart observation on shortcomings, and never a word of praise on what they might have done competently. This fervour in doing all things well, coupled with an inability to relax or bend did not win him ready acceptance.

Nor did his sense of humour. It was expressed in a love of puns. Not just the occasional verbal sally, but word plays that went on endlessly. Beyond the bearing of those who lived with him.

Partly, this was a means of relating to others. Partly it was the reflection of an acute and agile mind that raced to associations and connections. Br Crowle, even as boy, was remembered by Arthur Calwell, a class mate who became Federal minister responsible for postwar immigration, and leader of the Labor Party as:
...the most talented of all the people ever educated at North Melbourne...And that is saying something, because North has produced many men who have served the Church...or community...in all walks of life.(5)

This was the calibre of man who was appointed headmaster in 1929. Before he responded to St Patrick's, he had to arrange an inspection of the Teacher's College by a panel of inspectors from Victoria. Crowle was nominally still in charge of Teacher Training, as well as headmaster of SPC. The Inspectors' report was a personal commendation:

Brother Crowle is now Master of Method; he holds the degree of BA...has fourteen years' experience as a teacher...is enthusiastic and very efficient...The inspectors observed a demonstration lesson which was very well prepared, admirably illustrated, and skilfully presented by the Master of Method.(6)

This inspection over Br Crowle took St Patrick's in hand. He had already begun a program of advertising the school. He stated in the Brothers own Journal Our Studies that the enrolment in the school was 120.(7)

The roll books do not quite bear this figure out, nor do the House Records of St Patrick's. They state that the number of boys only rose to 110 by the end of 1929.(8) Perhaps Crowle was just boosting numbers to make the school seem a thriving concern. By comparison with other new places, it was a failure even with 120. Christian Brothers Manly which opened a year after SPC
had 150 pupils on its books in the first year and had:

...fulfilled all expectations...the Brothers are loud in their praises of the commodious class-rooms and the convenient and comfortable residence...numbers will be largely increased in 1930.(9)

St Patrick's seemed folorn in contrast. Not only could its numbers not even be fabricated to equal the new school, but the 'Ark' where the Brothers lived, was such an uninviting place, even after a year of residence, that Crowle had a local tradesman named Barnes paint the hall, dining room, kitchen and bathrooms, and decorate the chapel and parlor.(10) This was one of his first actions on taking over. The 'Ark' at least looked a little fresher inside.

In the school, Br Crowle could sense growth long before it began to occur. He had dreams for the place. He showed, like Hickey, a capacity to forsee what was not there, but what he hoped would one day be St Patrick's. In a man so unimaginative in his daily living, this was an unexpected flair. Yet, he had this gift in full measure. In the first year of his headmastership, while the school was still struggling to reach 100, he had printed a prospectus which set the agenda for the growth of the College.(11) The heading in large letters was "Christian Brothers' School". Underneath in smaller print was, St Patrick's Strathfield. This
order is significant when compared to the later crest introduced by Br Coghlan. For Br Crowle, the school was part of the great empire of Hickey. It offered schooling in the tradition of the Christian Brothers. Later, for Coghlan, it would become a school that stood on its own. For Br Crowle, isolation was not one of its virtues.

The school was described on this same front page, as a primary, secondary, and technical school, and inside as offering courses of study leading to Bursary, Intermediate Certificate, and Leaving Certificate. From the beginning it was to be a school that went to the senior classes.

In the prospectus Drawing and Woodwork received additional mention as a special feature of the school, one intended primarily 'to improve the students intellectually' as well as prevent many of the pupils from 'drifting after school into "dead-end" (sic) occupations'. This had an added appeal to those who were surviving the depression. Yet, St Patrick's was never seen as a Technical School preparing students for entry into a trade. The Christian Brothers had such Technical Schools in Balmain, Newtown, Rozelle, and Paddington. Yet, in offering Technical Education, St Patrick's was not quite as one of these. Nor was it
like the nearby Christian Brother's Burwood which
though academic only went to the Intermediate.
Instead, it was a place where all students took
woodwork, but then went on to do an academic Leaving
Certificate.

St Patrick's needed a Technical department because it
was a school for teachers. The Order needed to
prepare the Brothers for what they might be teaching
later on in a range of schools. So St Patrick's
offered woodwork. It was necessary to have a fully
qualified tradesman as an instructor for the Brothers,
so 'Crich' found his place in the school.

If it would serve the interests of school, the
headmaster could stretch the truth a little. According
to the prospectus;

The building is a very handsome two story brick
structure, the architecture of which harmonizes
with the beautiful Romanesque Chapel of the
College.(12)

At the stroke of a pen, he had acquired a chapel. The
Brothers' chapel from Mt St Mary. It was implied that
both had been built to a master plan. In fact the
chapel was finished in 1923, and St Patrick's probably
had not even occurred to Hickey as a possibility at
that stage. But in the prospectus, the linking of the
buildings gave the school an air of expanse. Most Christian Brothers' schools did not have chapels at this time, so that to be claiming so comprehensive a campus, suggested the school was a much grander affair than the 110 pupils it actually had.

In this curriculum too, the students had access to another art apart from architecture;

The walls of the rooms are ornamented with valuable pictures which silently impress lessons in Geography and History, and at the same time tend to cultivate in the pupils a love for the beautiful. (13)

No valuable pictures have survived from this period. Probably, like the chapel, it was an exaggeration. The ordinary class room pictures became, for the purpose of advertising, works of value and beauty. This may have been a statement of his philosophy rather than achievement, or it might have reflected a commitment to the view, that art made a person more cultured and gentlemanly. The pupils of the College were told;

Singing both choral and solo, elocution and training in expression form a regular part of the school work. (14)

In these sessions they would hopefully acquire an acceptable pronunciation and the ability to sing in tune. Sport also received mention, gymnastics, drill, and Swedish exercises as well as ample place for
The art room in 1928.
field games but sport received no high-lighting in the Crowle curriculum.

Finally, St Patrick's was to be a school where class room teaching techniques were modern:

One of the largest class rooms is available for Magic Lantern and Picture projection. In this way scenes illustrative of lessons in Geography, History, Literature and other subjects will be portrayed for the pupils and afford them an opportunity of learning by an important modern method of instruction. (15)

The use of current technology, was another benefit in a school used for the training of teachers.

If there was one thing that was important to Crowle it was a commitment to minimum school fees;

The Brothers hope to be able to carry on all sections of the School work without making any extra charges. (16)

This prospectus represented the blueprint Crowle had for the school.

By contrast, the prospectus for Christian Brothers' Lewisham, a high school founded in 1891, made no mention of modern methods of instruction, nor of presenting works of art as important in the education of its students. St Patrick's was perhaps directing its advertising to those who would value wider cultural attainments than the standard fare offered by
Lewisham. (17) Or it might just have been that Crowle saw these accomplishments as important.

His guiding hand was soon seen in the devotional practices in the school. He began the 'Apostleship of Prayer' and the Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament. These were two religious groups which fostered prayer and attendance at weekday Mass. They were societies of piety which gave badges and certificates for particular devotions. There was on display a Diploma which linked St Patrick's to the headquarters of the Apostleship of Prayer in Rome. (18) This display fostered the idea that the Catholic school belonged to a Church that was world wide and whose devotional practices were equally transnational. It posed no difficulty for the Brothers and students of St Patrick's to see Rome as the centre of their religious lives. Mass each Sunday was said in Latin, and boys who became altar servers would parrot off the Latin phrases of the Mass. Latin was the language of official prayer, and Latin was the language of the Church whose government resided in the Vatican. These links to Rome were just a part of Catholic devotional life. They had no hidden subversive purpose.

The high point of devotional life was the annual retreat which Br Crowle introduced in his first year.
Communion Breakfast around 1929

Br Crowle is at centre rear.
There was much preparation for this. 'Crich' built an altar and placed a large picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the centre of this altar. The middle upstairs class room became a chapel. Normal class work became hushed as the senior boys strictly observed a time table of prayers, lectures and readings that enveloped these three days in an atmosphere of intense piety. The Brothers merely supervised and saw that the supply of pious reading was kept up to date. All else was in the hands of Fr Cahill the Redemptorist priest who directed the retreat.

In fact, such strict silence was kept that even those at home were edified by the conduct of the boys. (19)

The daily time table recommended to the Brothers for a strict retreat was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>Explanation of Holy Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Holy Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>Free Time (in silence always)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>Reading in common (spiritual lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Hymn, Rosary, Visit, Hymn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="..." /> <img src="image" alt="and so on through the day..." /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Home in silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>Benediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>Night Prayers in common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>Home in Silence (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students readily adopted this time table. A retreat at Burwood Christian Brothers in 1930 was described;
\ldots school work had been set aside\ldots in order that the boys might devote their thoughts to the all important business of life—the business of their immortal souls. The manner in which they observed the imposed silence was truly remarkable\ldots and\ldots is bound to live long in the memory of those who were fortunate enough to participate in it.\textsuperscript{(21)}

This was the spiritual climax of 1929 and stayed in the memory of boys as a significant experience. Even as one of the high lights of their school days.\textsuperscript{(22)}

The parents caught something of the devoutness of Br Crowle. In 1929, a Mr Reakes of Belmore, asked if he could donate a shrine to Our Lady of Perpetual Succor, the patroness of the Brothers. Br Crowle agreed and immediately set about acquiring a copy of the picture from Italy.\textsuperscript{(23)}

While students could recall this retreat with fervour, they were not so carried away with zeal that they lost a sense of mischief. At times too, the reverence shown during retreat was set aside. When there was a singing of the Litany of the Saints, the 'Ora pro nobis' and the 'Orate pro nobis' became 'don't wash your clothes'. And for the longer responses they added, 'on a stormy day'.\textsuperscript{(24)}

They soon arrived at a nickname for Br Crowle. It came from a rhyme they all knew. The headmaster had a
swarthy complexion, and tight close cropped curls. The rhyme went like this:

Nigger, nigger, pull the trigger,  
Bang, bang, bang... (25)

For the rest of his days in the school, Br Crowle was known to the boys as 'Nigger'. The name did not imply any racist slur. It was simply the boys' attempt to even up the ground between the headmaster and themselves.

For Br Crowle, one of the great omissions of the previous year had been the absence of a school Concert. This was a first for St Patrick's. It brought him back to his Toowoomba days where he took the choir and won acclaim for his singing. On December the 18th at 8.00pm the parents were seated in the Strathfield Town Hall, when the orchestra struck up with "True Blue". Then followed tableaus, choirs, drill routines. Fr Kerwick presenting the prizes at item 11, then another 11 items to come till "God Bless Our Lovely Morning Land", signalled the end of the night. The school had three divisions, Junior, Intermediates, and Seniors, and each was responsible for a portion of the concert. As well there were solo items. This was standard Christian Brother fare. Lewisham had the year before introduced a school orchestra, and presented 'The
Mikado' as well as musical sketches, choir items and drill. (26) St Patrick's Strathfield was now developing along the same lines. The end of year speech night was all part of the machinery from the corporate school ideal, which the Christian Brothers had imitated when they moved into secondary schooling.

With Christmas only a week off, a rest might have seemed in order after this first year. Not so. Br Crowle had two more tasks to see to. The first of these had been under way for some time. If the school was to survive, let alone grow, it needed an influx of boys. But not just anyone. He wanted this to be an academic school, and so he began to seek out the brighter students in the surrounding convents and win them over for his College. He had visited these schools earlier and had spoken to likely candidates about bursaries, giving them the date for the exam to be held at St Patrick's.

What an impressive day it was, going to this massive building for the first time. Brother gathered us together and showed us over the place. I was impressed by its massive emptiness. He put us all at ease with his talk about the college, promised us a 'tuck in' when the exam ended...then set us going...what a promoter was Br Crowle. At least 40 of the bursary examinees became students of the College. The exam over, one forward individual enquired about the 'tuck in'. I remember Br Crowle's reply, "Get your mother to do it on my behalf, tonight." Looking back, it is still difficult to realise that I won
a bursary...the good man gave me a bursary out of the goodness of his heart. Without that bursary I would certainly not have been a student at SPC.(27)

This gathering of students represented the culmination of Crowle's visits. As well he set and corrected the papers and so could decide which boys were to be awarded bursaries, and which were not. As superior of the Brothers he requested his community to visit prospective parents in Epping, Lakemba, Punchbowl, Lidcome, Auburn, and Granville during the Christmas Holidays of 1929 and encourage them to send their boys to the school.(28)

The second task for Br Crowle was to organise a special bus to pick up these new students on a route between Belmore and St Patrick's. He would subsidise this, and the students were to be charged a penny halfpenny each way. This arrangement rounded off the year.

1930 opened with increased numbers. There were insufficient desks initially and over 150 Pounds were spent to buy new ones. More was afoot than desks. The first Intermediate class was to face the exam at the end of the year, and Br Crowle wanted it to be impressive.

Br De Sales Mc Carthy began to teach the Intermediate boys, left in May and Br Patrick Dwyer replaced him and
The College bus and the Ark in the background. Around 1930.
took the first intermediate class through. Br Dwyer was in his late forties. Lean, and leathery, and just getting back to teaching after illness. (29) He was, like 'Crich' a carpenter who had joined the Order at the age of 23, and had been headmaster of schools in Tasmania and Adelaide and was a senior mathematics teacher of wide experience. Br Crowle must have rejoiced that such a man had come his way for the first Intermediate. A former pupil in Adelaide recalled the man:

In class, his style was easy. He never raised his voice...His restraint, I think is the virtue for which I would place him highest—never any playing to the gallery, no personal flamboyancy...Out of school, I found it a great pleasure to talk to him: he was clearly interested in others...he could talk about sport, but it was clear that his main interest was in religion and the life of the school. (30)

Br Dwyer settled that first class of ten to work. The records are sketchy. All that they say are:

Br Patrick got ten boys the Intermediate in 1930 altho. (sic) he had to work up the class in Chemistry and Physics in five months from the very commencement. (31)

Still, he managed to get them all through.

In this second year, sport also assumed a more organised place. Under the traditional Christian Brothers' crest the school assembled on the 12th November at St Luke's oval Concord for the first ever Athletic Carnival at St Patrick's. There were
ENROLMENT CHANGES 1928 - 1945

SOURCE: SCHOOL REGISTER.
fifty-nine events all running at three minute intervals. The first race, the open 100 yards handicap, left the starters hands at 11.30am and the last, the 440 yard junior championship at 4.35pm. The printing of a programme with all the student's names suggested that Br Crowle saw the need for St Patrick's to be organised, and for that organisation to be apparent to any spectators. Crowle was not interested in athletics or sport generally and so this was not a personal whim. It was rather that having a sport's day publically lifted the school from the malaise of its first year, and presented it for display and scrutiny. This move took St Patrick's into athletics and began, without knowing it at the time, what was to be an area of outstanding sporting achievement.

The playing fields saw St Patrick's sorting out deeper rivalries. Many St Patrick's students had come from Christian Brothers' Burwood. Those who remained at Burwood never forgave the renegades.

There arose a rivalry which was very real, very keen, and...you would think it was a battlefield when we played Burwood.

These games were either at St Luke's oval Burwood or at the College. The College oval, near Mt St Mary's, had a rough surface, but this did not prevent 'Crich' racing along the sidelines giving loud excited advice.
As well, Br Kent would frequently represent these encounters on the notice board in cartoon form. On one occasion it became almost:

...war in a holy cause. On the ground outside St Luke's one year an angry mob pelted the Strathfield players and threatened to beat some of them up. (35)

There were more serious difficulties than sport. The depression was on. Many of the students arrived each day by train:

...at times Br Crowle was hard put to it to get all his scholars in shoes and socks. In wet winter weather things were made awkward by the distance of the College from the railway, the infrequent bus service and the unmade muddy roads between the school and Flemington. (36)

The Brothers had felt it necessary to hire a night watchman to protect their vegetables growing between the school and the Novitiate.

Br Crichton was walking down through the vegetable garden in the moonlight when a figure leapt from the bushes and pointed a pistol at Br C's head. The old digger had his hands full so pushed his neck as far forward as possible to show his white collar reminiscent of a white flag. (37)

Yet if the Brothers took such steps to keep out marauders, Br Crowle was aware of the poverty of at least one of his bursary winners. The 1932 prospectus shows twenty-one boys who were winners of bursaries worth Fifty pounds. This, apart from swelling the numbers at the school, was one way of helping families
who would not otherwise have been able to send their sons to St Patrick's. Br Crowle later told one of the bursary winners that when he visited his home, he had never seen real hardship until that moment, and yet he (Crowle) had taken a vow of poverty all his life. The parent occupations given at enrolment time made only one mention of being unemployed. Yet, the nature of the occupations, as shown on the accompanying table suggests hardship would probably be more common than this single instance of unemployment. During this time the enrolments grew and by the end of Crowle's time they had climbed to over three hundred. Perhaps it was hope, that education would lead to a job, perhaps it was the experience that work was not available, and that school at least kept boys occupied.

For these boys, song was often used to keep hardship sentimentalised away:

When your hair has turned to silver, we will still be on the dole,  
We will still collect the tickets as we did in days of old.  
To the Town Hall steps we'll wander, down the dusty road we'll stroll.  
When your hair has turned to silver, we will still collect the dole. (38)

The parents of the boys had still another way of dealing with the depression. Crowle offered to the parents, piety, devotional practices, to win God's help
PARENT OCCUPATIONS 1928 - 1938

SOURCE: SCHOOL REGISTER.
in difficult times. In 1931, Crowle's personal dedication to the mother of God occupies most of the account of what happened in the school that year:

The feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor June 27...was the occasion of a wonderful demonstration of devotion to the Holy Mother of God. Several hundred parents and friends attended. The ceremony commenced with a grand procession through the grounds...A brass band was in attendance and played the accompaniment to the hymns...the day was beautifully fine...It seemed as if the sweet and gracious Virgin Mary smiled her approval and accepted the offering...(39)

This religious feeling was a reflection that times were hard. Such processions and prayers might win a reprieve from hardship now, or if that were not possible then there was the promise of recompense in the next life. This world was indeed a vale of tears, and hymns were the adult way of dealing with the disappointments of life. They could sing of their hope, and confidence that God was noting their difficulties, and in his own time would wipe away the tears.

It would seem that Crowle was having difficulties of his own during the next year 1932. His directing hand was beginning to falter in the small things. There was not a word written in the House Annals for the whole of that year. It fell to Crowle's successor to record that the school ran as usual. This is an indication
perhaps, that the energies of the man had been drawn on too long, and had not been replenished. At the end of the year, he had a disagreement with one of the Brothers, and went straight to the Provincial to demand the man be changed. The Provincial refused to remove the Brother, Crowle tended his resignation, and it was accepted. (40) He was then sent to Manly, and allowed to rest until he recovered.

Eventually he returned to full school duties. He was Headmaster of several of the Order's schools in Melbourne. Br Crowle remained an aloof, lonely figure who related only by pun or debate, and who lived the rule without deviation. He died in 1970.

And yet, but for Br Crowle, St Patrick's may well have collapsed. This mercurial harsh figure, who wore himself out between 1929-32 has never been given his due. No building has been named in his honour and those who came to the school through his energy and kindness, have long since left it. Difficult as he was to live with, it was Br Crowle's view of what St Patrick's could be, which saved the school.
FOOTNOTES

(1) CBER, 1972, p. 257
(2) Br. Greening interview, 14.11.86
(3) Notes of Br. Kent in possession of author, p. 4
(4) Interview with Ted Healey, 28.10.86
(5) CBER, 1972, op. cit., p. 252
(6) Our Studies, Oct. 1929, Report in full, p. 6-7
(7) ibid., p. 11
(8) House Annals, 1929
(9) Our Studies, Oct. 1929, p. 31
(10) House Annals, 1929
(11) Prospectus, in author's possession.
(12) ibid.
(13) ibid.
(14) ibid.
(15) ibid.
(16) ibid.
(17) CBHS. Lewisham, Annual Record 1928
(18) House Annals, 1929
(19) Our Studies, Oct. 1929, p. 5
(20) ibid., p. 6
(21) Our Studies, Oct. 1930, p. 37
(22) Interview with Tony Good, 10.2.87
(23) Lumen, 1978, p 11
(24) Interview with Tony Good, 10.2.87
(25) ibid.

(26) Notes of Br. Kent in possession of author.

(27) Jim O'Dea, recollections of his time at SPC (1929-32) in possession of author.

(28) House Annals, 1930

(29) CBER, 1972, p. 94f

(30) ibid., p 95

(31) House Annals, 1930

(32) Programme for First Sports in possession of author.

(33) Jim O'Dea op. cit., p. 3

(34) ibid.

(35) Br Kent, op.cit.

(36) ibid.

(37) Br Kent, op.cit.

(38) Interview with Jim O'Dea, 13.3.87

(39) House Annals, 1930

(40) Br Kent op. cit.
Br Michael Eulogius Breen found himself unexpectedly headmaster of St Patrick's. Officially, Br Crowle still had two years of his second term to complete. However, his resignation saw Br Breen appointed.

Br Breen was emerging as one of the outstanding Christian Brothers in the Australian Province. Perhaps next to the superior of Mt St Mary's, Br Hanrahan, he was the archetypal Christian Brother. He was an intellectual of a high order, just having graduated from Sydney University in both Arts and Economics; he was an outstanding schoolman, and had recently completed his term as headmaster of Christian Brothers' Lewisham; he was a gentleman, gifted with Irish charm and the Irish capacity to tell a story; he was a hard physical worker, prepared to wield pick or mattock to better any school he was sent to. Others like Br Purton or Br Tevlin could challenge him intellectually, but no one other than Hanrahan, had his capacity for physical work, nor his delight in it. He was the Irish Monk-scholar transported to Australia, gifted at the books, but revelling in the building of his monastery, or the tilling of a field. This was Michael Eulogius Breen.
Like Br Ignatius Hickey, he was a new arrival in Australia, stepping off the boat in 1922. Rumour had it that he was sent out as a safeguard, as his family had been involved in the Irish civil war and it was well to put distance between Michael Breen and Ireland. (1) In 1926 he had been appointed headmaster of Lewisham, the second largest Christian Brothers' school in NSW and a very successful academic school. It was during his headmastership that he had finished University. It was expected that he would continue the flourishing St Patrick's begun by Crowle, and perhaps bring less rigidity to the Brothers in his interpretation of their rule of life.

In his first year Breen let the school run as it had under Crowle. At the end of his first year, it was the Crowle bursary boys who did well in public exams. John Guinan had outstanding results in the Intermediate, nine A's and two B's. It was the best pass in the state. As well, nine students passed the Leaving Certificate, a record for the College and Jim Nash won a University Exhibition, the first for the College with first class honours in Maths 1 and 11 and second class honours in Physics. While numerically, this was not as impressive as the thirty-four Leaving Certificate passes of Christian Brothers' Waverley
(founded 1902) or the twenty-six of Lewisham, it was making ground on St Patrick's Goulburn (founded 1874) which had fifteen successful boys. The Brothers listed their results in their magazine, presumably to encourage friendly rivalry between schools, and perhaps, as a reassurance that the resource going into Catholic schooling was bearing fruit.

Br Breen continued entering St Patrick's in the Christian Brothers Eisteddfod, he kept the end of year concert going, the display of pupils work, the annual dance, and car drive. Nothing had changed much, except that this headmaster had his own dog, a large brown mutt which followed him everywhere, and would sleep under his table during class.

He fostered too, the retreat for the senior boys, and like Crowle saw this as a vital part of the devotional life of the College:

> The boys entered into the experiences of the retreat with marked earnestness...The silence was strictly observed and the general communion was a fitting climax.

In addition, he introduced the St Vincent de Paul society to the school and kept the boys working on monthly drives to supply clothes and literature to the orphanages and the old men's home at Lidcome. The St
Vincent de Paul society was going to play a particular role in the Breen story, but that was much later.

This absence of change on the outside concealed Breen's plans. He had already noted that the secondary boys needed new class rooms, as the science rooms were being used for ordinary classes. He had given the Brothers an additional bedroom, a new laundry and linen press and employed a yardman.

But more importantly, he wanted St Patrick's to have an oval. None of the other Christian Brother's schools had fields. The ground he had in mind was in front of the school, ideal in position, but unpromising in both slope, and in the number of owners to be approached.

It was depression time. The boys were still singing about being on the dole. If he tipped his hand too early, then the price might rise beyond reach, or worse, only half an oval would be purchased. Breen knew the right man for just this sort of work. There are no records of how it was accomplished Breen merely wrote in the house annals:

Mr W.P. Beahan acted as agent to carry out negotiations with sixteen different owners and succeed[ed] in concealing from all the others the transaction in hand...this was no easy task.

To record that the land for the oval cost a thousand Pounds is to leave unimagined the cloak and dagger
round of door knockings and meetings that managed to preserve this secrecy. Beahan must have been some agent.

This was all clandestine activity. Meanwhile, the school had diversions of its own which filled the chatter of the boys at lunch times, or as they waited for class. This had to do with the latest escapade of the 'bitzer' as the College bus was known. Crowle had bought this bus in 1932 and this was its first year. It became a focus of hope that on one of its morning or afternoon runs another adventure would top that which had occurred earlier that day. Breen eventually sold 'the bitzer'. There was no decrease in enrolments.

One who must have heaved a huge sigh of relief at the sale was a dreamy eyed Br Robinson who had joined the staff during Crowle's time and who taught the junior classes, and Latin to the seniors.(8) Each morning he rode a bike over to Belmore to board the bus, and each afternoon, took his bike again on the bus to ride back to St Patrick's. He had to issue weekly tickets, changing their colour often so that no one could escape paying.(9)

The same Br Robinson caused gasps on the night of the annual concert in 1933. As his choir sang "At The Zoo"
there was a magic lantern slide on the screen of each animal that was being sung about. This was certainly more impressive, though not more enjoyable than the item of "Crich" where the boys in the cow costume lost their way and kept blundering around the stage until they just stopped, threw off the costume, and ran for the wings and oblivion.(10) This was the end of Br Breen's first year.

In 1934, after a year of quiet, Breen exploded into activity. A secondary block had to be built:

The erection of a new building for the accommodation of the secondary classes had become essential...Mr J J Hennessy acted as architect. A plan for 13 classrooms... was drawn up...Six classrooms were erected...The Strathfield Council insisted on the erection of a separate lavatory block for the new building. One quarter of the plan was proceeded with. All the above premises were occupied on the opening day 1935.(11)

Continuing the Hennessy style suggested the design of a grander campus for the future and yet one still linked in design to the Training College of the Brothers. As the reference to Strathfield Council shows, it was not plain sailing. The toilet block was presumably one reason why only part of the original plan was carried out. Perhaps also the depression saw funds dry up. Breen went ahead with six classrooms, and the building was ready with furnishings by the start of 1935.
Perhaps, because numbers had levelled off, he thought it too ambitious to build the thirteen rooms just yet.

But the Breen explosion involved more than buildings. The man had other calls on his energies. In March he was asked to address the assembled Catholic undergraduates of Sydney University on the subject of "Anti-catholic Predjudices in the Writing of History." (12) Breen must have been thought a significant figure in Catholic Intellectual circles. Perhaps as a recent double graduate he was known in the University. Both men and women from St John's and Santa Sophia residential Colleges, and members of the Newman Society came. In the 1934 editorial of Our Studies the exhortation had been made:

A Christian Brother must never relax his study...His knowledge of Christian Doctrine and Sacred History must advance with the years...So that he may know how to apply the principles of Christ to the problems of modern society. (13)

So Breen, Christian Brother and scholar, was speaking to the premiere Catholic intellectuals in Sydney, representing the Order in a city in which the Christian Brothers were second-besters, school masters a long way behind the Jesuits of Riverview or the Marist Brothers of St Joseph's. Sydney was the only Australian capital where the Christian Brothers did not have a school in
the 'Public Schools' Associations. Breen must have impressed someone to be speaking to this group.

His paper ran to over 10,000 words. It was a polemic addressed to believers. The Irish story-teller-teacher was evident in so many little touches. His topic was the anti-Catholic bias in the writing of history. Breen wanted to leave his audience with the conviction that Catholics had made such contributions to the intellectual life of the English, that only blind prejudice or perversity would fail to be convinced by a perusal of famous Catholic scholars:

Do you know that Linacre, the founder of the Royal College of Physicians, became a priest towards the end of his life, and that John Caius, who founded Caius College, Cambridge and who acted as physician to Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, was a devout Catholic? (14)

It is too long a paper to quote at length. But in the final section he attacked the high priest of history Edward Gibbon, whose bias against the church is derived, not from primary documents but from tainted secondary sources. (15) Then he turned to the contemporary historian, J.B. Bury whom his listeners must have studied in both school and university, and demonstrated his carelessness about dates:

Bury...the Regius Professor made a mistake of twenty years in the date of the death of St Agustine. Every schoolboy knows the date of the
Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but Professor Bury is wrong by nine years...more amazing still is his blunder about Robespierre...(16)

This is the method of the court room. Discredit the witness in large things by showing incompetence in the small. They were a sort of jury, trying historians biased against the Church, and this style of argument varied the lecture, and kept interest. At the end of the evening all must have felt that the church had nothing to fear from any genuine historical inquiry.

Breen, the scholar who spoke that night, left behind in the St Patrick's library many books, that others found beyond them.(17) His reputation was based on wide reading. Probably no other headmaster of St Patrick's had his public acclaim as a scholar.

He had energy to invest in not only his studies, but in hard physical work. Just a few weeks after this address, he appeared in boots, long khaki trousers shirt and felt hat, to begin the building of the oval:

The levelling off of a site for the College Oval was commenced in June. The work was undertaken by a group of parents...The laying out of the school grounds about the new school took up part of the time of the working "B".(18)

This labour went on weekend after weekend, and often during the week, Breen, would spend a couple of hours loosening rock with either a pick or crowbar, so that there would be something to cart when the group arrived
on Saturday. The first job was to lay down the storm water drains. This took two months, not two weeks as the group had first thought. (19) It was the beginning of a realisation that the Oval would stretch into a task taking years, not months, and that many would despair of it ever being finished. (20) Breen did not appear to doubt either his, or the group's capacity to get the job done. He purchased two horses, a dray and a couple of scoops to keep the levelling going, and with these he could then look around for other materials. For 10 Pounds, he secured the right to clean up Todman's Estate, (Strathfield Girl's High School today) and for several weeks the working "B" carted stone from Todman's to the oval. That stone today, is in the retaining wall, and the best of it caps the present oval boundary fence. (21)

These workers, who turned up week after week, so impressed Breen, that he recorded their names in the Brothers' Annals. This was a private document, only ever viewed by the Brothers. (22) Saturdays must have, as the weeks went by, seen this group form a little community of their own. Breen certainly seems to have drawn extraordinary energy from the whole project, so that even when he was moved from St Patrick's, he kept coming back and working on the Oval. (23)
Some of Breen's enthusiasm impressed itself on the boys during classes. Often, the day would be punctuated by an explosion:

Dynamiting was Br Breen's hobby...to remove crags from the oval...The chief result I saw was a considerable hole in the roof of the new dressing shed...The blasting continued throughout the year...vases tumbled from altars...apart from that...it seemed to produce scant results.(24)

Eventually he carved out the Oval.

But there was more to occupy his time in the school than the playing fields. He continued efforts to buy adjoining properties and had C.J. White, a friend from his Lewisham days, look after the legal side of these transactions in "his own masterly way".(25)

In 1934 the annual trip to Wollongong for football started. Eventually these were to become famous excursions for the school, but in this year, Br Campbell, the headmaster of CBC Wollongong arranged for the first visit to take place.(26) Breen had recently introduced changes to the uniform. On field the boys now wore a royal blue jersey with a wide band of black around the waist and a narrow band of gold on either side. Off the field they wore a royal blue blazer with vertical stripes of black and gold.(27) This was more of the corporate school paraphernalia.
While sport was important enough for him to introduce these changes to dress, he did not write about sport in the annals. There he noted that the devotional side of the school life was being attended to. This emphasis had support in the Brothers' magazine, which editorialised:

Knowledge without piety is useless, but piety without knowledge might well suffice to save. The Cure of Ars was no theologian, but he transformed a whole countryside...Let us make our boys pious. (28)

Breen carefully commented that the retreat for 1934 had been "productive of much good", and that other societies which fostered devotion and prayer in the school, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Holy Childhood Association, and the Crusaders, were doing well. (29)

In the public examinations in 1934, St Patrick's was still reaping the benefits of Crowle's bursary boys. Six sat and passed the leaving and two of these won University Exhibitions. John O'Brien, who had come from Bellmore improved on Jim Nash the year before by gaining three first class honours. Twenty sat and passed the intermediate. While all this was reason to rejoice, St Patrick's was far behind Christian Brothers' Waverley, which had thirty-five pass the leaving, and seventy the Intermediate, and Breen's old
school Lewisham, had seventeen pass the leaving and three of these won Exhibitions. But, St Patrick's was at least breaking into the senior area, and getting high passes.

1935 began with the new building finished and the boys taking up residence. There was no official opening. Probably because most of the master plan remained uncompleted. The whole of the secondary school was now in the new building. (30)

Each Saturday, the working "B" assembled and began to dig. Breen recorded merely:

The oval group continued their work during the year. (31)

This again meant an extraordinary amount of energy going into work, and all of it voluntary. In Breen's mind games seemed to hold a high place. He announced to the school one day that St Patrick's had been accepted into the Metropolitan Catholic Colleges competition. At this stage there were two Marist Brothers' schools, Randwick and Darlinghurst, De La Salle Ashfield, Holy Cross College Ryde, Christian Brothers' Lewisham and now St Patrick's Strathfield. Victory in the MCC was to become a touch stone by which to judge sporting success at St Patrick's for the next
30 years. But in this first year, there were not many indications of the victories to come:

Alas for our teams that year...Our first match we played against Randwick on a wet miserable day at Coogee...the score was given as 70-0. I had expected it to be more. Next we played Lewisham. Three minutes after the start we led 2-nil. When the final bell went we had lost 72-2...we were making a tradition—not a tradition of hollow success, but a tradition of not squibbing the odds, of going down and coming up for more.(32)

Nor did membership of the MCC awe the Wollongong boys. They defeated St Patrick's in the second annual match. The mentality which saw sport as a training ground for the sterner battles of life justified all the efforts that Breen and his workers put in every Saturday, and the hours the teachers gave to the teams they coached. It was Thomas Arnold firmly in residence at St Patrick's.

The Cricket team of 1935 redeemed a little the sporting honour of this first year in the MCC. It finished as runner up to Marist Brothers' Darlinghurst. The captain John Dennehy, or Jack as the school knew him, was the first sportsman hero of the school:

Dennehy was, without doubt, the fastest bowler the school has seen (with J.Dormer second and L. Shanahan's flying bumpers possibly third)...Dennehy had an average of 117 runs...and in the eight games of the year had taken 53 wickets at a cost of 4.8 runs...A First XI bowling record. He also held College top-score record for the XI, 130.(33)
That these figures were recalled eleven years after the season might just have been a tribute to an enthusiasm for keeping records. But the reference to 'fastest bowler the school has seen' suggests it was more than this. It indicated that sport was the arena where heroes performed, and that under Breen, the school was not going to develop along other than traditional lines, with athletes occupying the places of honour in the schoolboy hall of fame. There was another cricketing record in that first year in the MCC. It went to the under 14 cricket team when they played De La Salle Ashfield. They scored 440 runs for the loss of only 4 wickets, and John Darragh made 188 not out. This augured well for a future XI in the MCC.

The year was not all sport. There had, in 1935, been an inspection of the school which continued approval of it being the practicing school for the Teachers' Training College. The Inspectors came from the Victorian Department of Education which required the registering of all Training Colleges. This was important only for the Brothers teaching in Victoria, but it indicated that the Training School had this function. However this role was rarely referred to by the Brothers at St Patrick's. The year also saw approval of the school under the Bursary Endowment
This enabled the school to take state scholarship holders. St Patrick's was officially, a complete school.

The concert that year did not have all the dignity that might be expected from such a complete school. The parents had packed Ashfield Town Hall, expecting, and receiving 'high culture'. "Julius Caesar" was progressing well. Caesar (the same Jack Dennehy who had terrorised the batsmen of the MCC) had been slain, and Antony was repeating to a hushed hall his misgivings about the honour of Brutus. Suddenly there was a movement at the side of the stage, and one of the scenes started to sway. Caesar felt it, opened his eyes, and leapt. Antony halted mid-sentence as scene after scene crashed down. The dead Caesar and the portly dignified senators dashed about to avoid the cascading Capitol Hill. No one was hurt, but Caesar had indeed been destroyed and that production was remembered long after many of the more serious attempts had been forgotten. Speech night was a resounding success.

At the end of 1935, Br Breen was moved to the Training College. He remained there until 1943, when he left the Order permanently. He later, 1950-58, became Town Clerk of Woomera. He retired to live on Norfolk
Island. In 1961 he became suddenly ill and was flown to Auckland for treatment, but died soon after arrival. No one knew him, there were no relatives to arrange for his funeral, so he was buried by the St Vincent de Paul Society and the hospital chaplain.

In 1962, after hearing of Michael Breen's death, the Woomera Board renamed the local Arboretum Park, the Breen Park in memory of Michael Breen. They erected an archway bearing his name, at the entrance to the park, and then developed the area to include animal and bird enclosures together with larger grounds containing trees, shrubs, lawns, barbeques, and playground equipment. The small zoo provides visitors with an introduction to Australian fauna and the park is much used by local and visitors. (36)

In 1986 the Christian Brothers decided to erect a head stone over Michael Breen's twenty-five year old grave. It reads:

In Loving Memory of

Michael Eulogius Breen

Exemplary Christian Scholar

And Esteemed Teacher

Br Breen had maintained the drive that Br Crowle brought to the school. He moved the school into a new area by taking it into the MCC. His successor would make other changes.
FOOTNOTES

(1) Br McGlade, Mr Ted Healy, Br Keenan, Mr Jim O'Dea, all referred separately to some previous unspecified trouble in Ireland. They could all have heard the same rumour, but unlikely.

(2) *Our Studies*, April 1934, p. 56. (Each year the Brother's magazine gave the results of their Australian Schools in the various state public examination classes.)

(3) *Lumen*, May 1947, p. 34

(4) *House Annals* 1933

(5) *ibid*.

(6) *ibid*.

(7) *ibid*.

(8) Jim O'Dea Unpublished recollections of SPC Early days in author's possession.

(9) *Lumen*, 1978, p. 14

(10) *Lumen*, May 1946, p. 8

(11) *House Annals* 1933

(12) *Our Studies*, April 1934, p. 40

(13) *ibid*., p. 46

(14) *ibid*., p. 46

(15) *ibid*., p. 48

(16) *ibid*., p. 47
(17) Ted Healey, interview 18.11.86

(18) House Annals 1933

(19) *Lumen*, May 1946, p. 8

(20) House Annals, 1933 (note by Br Mc Glade added 1985)

(21) *ibid*.

(22) Breen named the men, and their suburbs: Messes O'Neill, Keating, Carton, Murray from Bellmore; Cahill, Mitchelmore, O'Donnell-Strathfield; Poland, Dennehy-Auburn; Shanahan- Lakenba; Scott-Burwood; Brandt-Croydon; Connor-Pennant Hills; Ellison-Flemington; and the surveyor Egan from Willoughby.

(23) House Annals, (Mc Glade note on Annals)

(24) Kevin Moore (ex-student) in *Lumen*, May 1947 p. 32

(25) House Annals 1934

(26) *Lumen*, August 1946, p. 5

(27) *ibid*., p. 4

(28) *Our Studies*, April 1934, p. 1

(29) House Annals 1934

(30) *Lumen*, Dec. 1946, p. 8

(31) House Annals 1935

(32) *Lumen*, May 1947, p. 34-5

(33) *Lumen*, Dec. 1946, p.9

(34) House Annals 1935

(35) *Lumen*, May 1947, p. 35
(36) Letter 2.7.84 from the Woomera Board to Mr H. Stephens.
Br Crowle wanted a boy's soul, not his school fees, and Br Breen, a new school and an Oval, the new headmaster wanted the soul, school fees and all the rest. He was Br John Vincent Coghlan. Under him St Patrick's established an unmistakeable identity. Crowle had wanted exam success. Sport within the MCC was the legacy of Breen. To these Coghlan added Dress. These became the hallmarks by which St Patrick's could define itself. But in reverse order, dress, exam results and sport. They filled the horizon of the school.

Br Coghlan from his first year, was relentless in pursuing this triumvirate. Such singlemindedness suggested a man with a limited view of the world, and of educational endeavour:

He was a man of little scholarship and queer pedagogy, a mystery man who spoke little and thought much...whenever anything was suggested his answer was neither yea or nay but just silence until he thought over it at his leisure.

Coghlan himself once confessed:

You know, sometimes one has to appear stupid in order to get one's own way in something.

Beneath the obtuse exterior this comment suggests there was more guile than his silence might indicate. Certainly, he was not an innovator. His ideas were extremely limited but he carried them out with such
vigour that they pre-occupied the school, and they also became a focus for favourable public opinion. He placed unparalleled importance on maintaining a high standard of dress and deportment. If the externals of uniform and bearing were impressive, the school would have a good name. For Coghlan, if a school looked good, it must have other virtues, though he did not systematically foster these. They were adjuncts of looking the gentleman:

Religious training, correct behaviour on all occasions, ... and a propriety in dress are what we consider the first essentials in our boys... the practice of courtesy at all times and an exactness in matters of dress and personal habits—these are what we are striving to inculcate; and until a boy is anxious to excel in these things, he cannot be considered to have made any progress worthy of the name. (4)

This was Coghlan's vision, described to St Patrick's boys and parents on his second term as headmaster of the school. There had been no development in his ideas, no change of outlook from his first year in the College. The school quickly came to realise that he would never be satisfied until he got what he wanted.

Soon after arriving he introduced the grey suit and set about designing a new college crest. For Coghlan, St Patrick's was not going to be just another school sharing the Christian Brothers' emblem with most of the
other Brothers' establishments. He called the Brothers of his community together and asked for ideas:

The form was to be a simple shield shape...Tim(sic) Healey shied off the "bar sinister" (Waverley) as it was used by the illegitimate heir of the family. The inverted chevron or stripe denoting "courage" was unanimous...It was at this time that gold was added to the blue and black of the initial colours.(5)

The badge owes more to the Waverley crest than the rejection of the bar sinister. Both places identify the school with a suburb. In the publications up to this point, St Patrick's had always been 'Christian Brothers, St Patrick's'. From this time foward, it would be 'St Patrick's Strathfield' or simply 'SPC'. By this change of name, a school on the margins of Homebush, would begin the task of elevating itself into association with a suburb having a reputation for exclusiveness. It was part of the drive to concentrate on externals, and all else would fit into place.

To this new crest Coghlan added a motto from the Gospel of Matthew, 'Luceat Lux Vestra', 'Let your light Shine' was how it has been translated to thousands of St Patrick's boys.(6) This was a more pious tag than Christian Brothers' Waverley 'Virtus Sola Nobilitas'. In addition to proclaiming the Gospel, the motto exactly fitted Coghlan's vision for the school. Make
the public aware of what a good school St Patrick's was:

The untidy, ill-mannered boy is out of his element at SPC. He is a source of embarrassment to his teachers and his fellow pupils; he lowers the good tone of the College and injures its reputation. (7)

In the Gospel it was 'so let your light shine that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven'. This was the Gospel aim. For Br Coghlan, it was probably satisfactory if there was shining, rather than light. The College was the agent which would turn out young men who were able to take their places easily in polite society. Shining social successes. Those outside the school seeing St Patrick's boys, would become aware that here were students who dressed impeccably and behaved with decorum. They showed none of the crude frolicking of lesser urchins.

To make his dream a reality, he enlisted Anthony Horderns to supply the new school uniform. It was not just an alliance of chance. Coghlan had negotiated to receive 10% of all the College sales. (8) From Anthony Horderns came a Mr Moses who built up a great service and who had the Anthony Hordern's van parked outside the College whenever Coghlan requested it. These requests came pretty often. Whenever he thought
necessary Br Coghlan would have an inspection. If there were any deficiencies, the boy was sent straight to the waiting van. Br Coghlan had a secretary who followed him, took all this down, and ensured not only that the bill was sent, but that the boy's name was recorded for later checking. He would be in severe trouble should he default again. The van did not only supply omissions, if there were torn clothes, or socks without garters, a seamstress in the van would attend to these boys. Br Coghlan was undeviating. There was simply no escape. Should a boy misbehave, he would be on punishment until the headmaster considered the offence would not reoccur. One of the ways to prevent misbehaviour was the prefect system Br Coghlan introduced:

The new headmaster gave great status to his prefects and said publically that they ranked next to the masters in seeing points of discipline were adhered to and obedience to authority maintained.

Br Coghlan had thought of everything:

There were prefects on every gate and heaven alone could help a boy with inky fingers or untied shoe laces; there were monitors on every tram; no running or cycling through the grounds...

When he left St Patrick's for St Kilda, the wartime restrictions saw the manufacturers unable to supply the metal cap badges. He appealed to all past students to
lend their badges and then published a list of all those who had done so in the school magazine. (12) The school could not buy proper socks, so Coghlan bought plain socks and had the tops made separately then stitched on to each pair of socks. (13) It was this obsession with uniform which was unleashed upon the boys of St Patrick's.

The result was a school which took Sydney by storm. At least the Sydney that travelled by train. (14) The public began to notice school boys who behaved with unbelievable restraint and whose dress was flawless. And they wrote to say so. (15) For Br Coghlan success had been achieved.

Not total success however. It was necessary that exam and sporting achievements match the appearance of the St Patrick's boys, then it would be among the best schools in Sydney.

Br Coghlan had with him, in 1936 a community of Brothers who could fulfill his hopes. Brs Kent and Robinson had been with the school since first days, and the newcomers, Mc Glade, Murphy, Hynes and Healey, were vigorous and talented men. There was only one absentee. "Crich" had been transferred to Paddington, and was to spend this one year away from the school.
Br Coghlan moved the Annual concert to Ashfield Town hall in April, and the account in the paper recorded:

A crowded house rewarded the efforts of the organisers...the bars and pyramids and the boxing exhibition and drill...received much applause...A new and novel item, "Speedway", in which 16 boys rode scooters...was extremely clever and well executed.(16)

This range of items, probably saw many of the 380 boys in the school take part.

Coghlan kept up the tradition of a retreat for the senior boys, and even introduced a modified version for the junior school:

Strict silence was required from the seniors during the three days and the way in which very many entered into the spirit of retreat was highly edifying. With the juniors (Classes IV & V) conditions were not so rigorous, though the spirit of a number was just as fervent as that of their elders. Undoubtedly all drew much profit from the exercises.(17)

Like Crowle and Breen, he saw such devotion as part of the spiritual training the school offered, and felt no need to revise the procedures but rather extend them.

In his write up of the year, he gave great attention to the College sporting performances in the MCC. He noted that Br Healey's first XIII football team defeated Randwick and Ashfield and that some of the weight teams, the 7st 7's, the 6st 7's, and the 5st 10's won games. He also records the cricket success and that St
Patrick's was fourth in the swimming carnival.\(^{(18)}\)

Athletics provided the most excitement. The College had its own carnival, and

The sports were very successful, there being over three hundred entrants, while the spirit of rivalry ran high between the four teams into which the school was divided.\(^{(19)}\)

Not only did Coghlan write up the sports, he had the results of every event printed in the paper.\(^{(20)}\) If Crowle or Breen did this they did not think it of sufficient importance to paste it into the house annals. Coghlan did. There was no doubting that Br Coghlan ran a school of great enthusiasm, and he seemed to share the excitement of sporting events. Certainly much energy must have gone into the organising of games. There was great school interest in the Junior athletic shield at the MCC inter-school carnival. The winner was decided on the last race. For the first time since joining the association the SPC team saw victory within grasp as G.Todd won the 100 yards under 13 and A.Mitchelmore the 75 yards under 11 equalling the record, while P.Clements set a new record under 10. In the last race of the day Lewisham hit the line first and took the shield.\(^{(21)}\)

Winning at sport seemed to be more important than any character formation that grew from defeat. Not that
Cricket Team in 1936 showing the sporting blazer.
Coghlan would ever tolerate ungentlemanly tactics. Nevertheless it was difficult for losing teams to shine. They were not living up to the school motto. Losers were not what he proclaimed for St Patrick's.

There were some winners when the boys from SPC went to Wollongong for their yearly football visit:

The superior of Wollongong community kindly extended his invitation once again to visit them with three football teams on the 15th August. Our three teams were successful in defeating their opponents. They were afterwards regaled in the munificent style by our kind genial host.(22)

These days, begun under Breen, were still popular, and it was becoming an occasion most seemed to enjoy. Not only was there a game of football, but a great feast afterwards.

Br Coghlan's first year was drawing to a close. It was decided that the Intermediate class under Br Healey would celebrate the end of the year by a class picnic at The National Park at Audley. There was a big swimming area, and plenty of boats to hire.

During the afternoon, one of the boys, Joseph Glenfield, was stepping from one boat into another when he fell in. It was deep water, and he was not able to swim. John Collins, another boy, went to help him, but was also not a good swimmer. Both boys sank, and those
nearby were unable to find them. (23) They went off to get Br Healey. He dived and dived, but found only long reeds. (24) The police arrived and eventually located the bodies. Both boys were dead. It was a grim home coming that afternoon. Br Healey had to break the news to the parents. Moments of anguish like this were something Coghlan found very difficult. The man was better relating as a headmaster, than in a role where he just had to be himself. The two boys were buried in a double funeral from St Martha's. The whole school formed a guard of honour and then went to the graveside. The double tragedy touched all, and there were messages of sympathy from many quarters.

That years exam results were cut out of the paper by Br Coghlan and pasted in the House Annals. Seven boys passed the Leaving in 1936 and thirty the Intermediate. Among the names were the two boys who had drowned.

In Coghlan's second year, "Crich" returned. He was noted merely as one of 'the new members of the community' for 1937. He fell back into his old role and woodwork again became a haven where all were treated with courtesy, and the normal strictures of silence, could be relaxed as plane and hammer drowned out chatter. But 1936 had been a hard time for "Crich". It was a year of crisis when he pondered the
direction his life had taken, and wondered if perhaps he should leave the Christian Brothers and become a lay Brother with the Franciscans, working on the mission fields. (25) During this time of indecision, someone dropped him a note from SPC telling him how much he was missed, and how many mementos there were of his work. (26) This helped him decide, and his return in 1937, so glibly referred to by Coghlan as 'a new community member' hid much personal uncertainty.

The events of the year unrolled smoothly.

In school the headmaster was a 'queer pedagogue':

His lessons never began until a calm, severe hush prevailed in the room. After closing the windows and seeing that all augured well for a quiet undisturbed period, Br Coghlan would allow some minutes to elapse before taking up the books. This very impressive solemnity proved very beneficial to concentration... Under Br Coghlan's guidance, we... relished the gaiety of Toad, [Wind in the Willows] the more sober animal-antics of Rat and Mole, and the grave beauty of that isolated chapter, "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn". (27)

Other teachers did not have this regimentation in their classes. Br Kent with a gift for sketching, used it to make his French lessons enjoyable. (28) And he could invent words, which in the small world of a school, became the language of its inmates. He used call busses 'bub-u-us' and boys 'bub-o-yug'. This seems not worth recalling except that this type of language
'swept the school'.(29) It was part of Br Kent's immense personal influence that the boys took up this jargon. Partly it was fun, partly an imitation of a teacher who did not talk down to them, and whom they admired for his manliness, and partly that his fun was infectious:

...in sport his admonitions were far too callous to be true...he instructed his gymnastic squad for a school concert to leave any fallen member until after the performance.(30)

Clearly, the boys knew he did not mean this, but they responded to such a man because he signified that not all Christian Brothers came in the serious mould. They enjoyed his teasing exaggerations.

Coghlan had this concert on for two nights, at Ashfield and Auburn. He noted that it was 'very well received by appreciative audiences'.(31)

There was the school retreat into which 'all entered whole heartedly'.(32) And there was sport:

...in all MCC competitions St Patrick's did very creditably. In the football...although our 1st XIII lost every game they always played with great spirit and upheld the honour of St Patrick's...St Patrick's Junior Athletic team lost the cup by a few points. Peter Clements again equalled the record for his age.(33)

This is abridged. Br Coghlan mentioned every team, and their final ranking in the MCC. He clearly felt it was
an important yardstick by which to judge the achievement of SPC. The school was participating with honour certainly, but not yet winning. And winners shone in a way honourable losers could not. In the MCC 'Lucent lux vestra' had not been achieved yet.

But in the examination results for 1937 there was a little more reason to rejoice. In the Intermediate examination Sidney Scott, obtained the best pass in the state:

...it remained for a lad, a pupil of St Patrick's College Strathfield to top the list with 9A's and 1 B, which incidentally is the third time in 5 years that a student from St Patrick's has headed the list of Intermediate passes.(34)

The new year, 1938, saw Br Coghlan undeviating in his insistence on uniforms:

Through the agency of Anthony Hordern's Stores, new pupils are uniformed immediately on enrolment.(35)

This took dress just that little bit further. Boys were now required to have the correct uniform as they enroled, and this implied that Br Coghlan was emphasising dress from the moment of initial contact with the school. Even before the first day as a pupil.

Someone had come up with a nickname for Br Coghlan. There was a character in the comic strips who always drove a hard bargain, and who let nothing escape him.
His name in the cartoon was 'Ming the merciless'. This was shortened for Br Coghlan to 'Ming', but the rest was always implied. 'Ming' like 'Crich' came to stay and was the only name the boys used from this time on. (36)

It was in 1938 that St Patrick's began to edge its way into sporting prominence in the MCC. The 1st XI were runners up to Darlinghurst, and in the football, the 7st 7's came second as did the 6st 7's who lost only one match. Br Kent looked after both these teams. The first premiership ever went to the 5st 10's. They had two coaches, Mr Gillespie and Br Murphy. The school was now beginning to shine. In the house annals it was written up:

The College Sporting Activities were an outstanding success, revealing a general improvement in every department of the MCC Association. (37)

There was too, the trip to Wollongong for football. Teams went down on August 15th, and this marked the conclusion of the season. They won these Wollongong games. (38)

Athletics showed even more promise than cricket and football in 1938 but victory was not to be. (39) There was a duel between Albert Lock of St Patrick's and a J. Fawkner of Christian Brothers' Lewisham. Fawkner was
The College Oval on sport's day around 1938.
the State under 15 champion in the 100, 220, 440 yards. Albert edged out Fawkner in the 100 in 10.6 seconds and created a new record. But despite this, and Paddy Dowling's win in the high jump under 14, SPC just lost the juvenile shield.

A few more triumphs remained however. The NSW Secretary of the Board of Examiners visited the School with an inspector of the Technical Training Branch. 'Crich' wrote up their visit:

They made an informal visit and inspection during a Test Session in Practical woodwork. They expressed admiration for the work done.(40)

Then there was the College Ball held at the Blaxland Galleries at which there were over 400.(41) The College was certainly shining its light. Also Anthony Horderns 'allocated' jobs during the Christmas holiday to any senior SPC boy who applied with a personal reference from Br Coghlan.(42)

The exam results for 1938 caused a stir. In the Sydney papers on the front page appeared the name of Bruce Abbott. He had topped the State with 9 A's in the Intermediate examination.(43) This publicity resulted in at least one student being sent to SPC because his father was impressed.(44) So was Coghlan. He had printed a special booklet in which he set out all the
SPC community in 1938.
Br Kent is seated on left, Br Coghlan is in the centre. 'Crich' is third from the right standing. Br McGlade is last on the right standing.
results for 1937, 8 in both the Leaving and Intermediate. Also included were those who had won Prizes at university such as J. O'Brien who won the University medal for Law, and D. Brown who topped the year in Chemistry 1. (45) The brochure suggested SPC as a school whose results were so outstanding that they needed publication. As well a school which kept links to its students at university. This was in line with Crowle's vision that it was a school concerned with the academic. But it fitted Coghlan's ideas that success was important. It also suggested that sending students to the University was one more aspect which made St Patrick's into a Christian Brothers' version of the English Public school. Coghlan himself did not have a University degree, so such advertising reflected, not personal conviction about University degrees, but rather the social importance of sending students on to the University and of them continuing to do well. It offered hope as well that St Patrick's could be trusted to take boys and educate them well beyond the dreams of their parents. Bruce Abbott making the papers, was an example of one such dream.

A number of the Brothers could claim some responsibility for the pass of Bruce Abbott. One such was Br McGlade. He had been at the school first in
1933, then transferred, and returned in 1936. Beginning in the lower classes, Br McGlade matured and as his experience grew he moved into higher classes. The Christian Brothers expected their men firstly to demonstrate their skills as teachers in the lower grades, and then to work their way up the school. As with other Brothers he soon acquired a nickname. To the whole school he was known as 'Jim'. It was his first name. With 'Jim' in the Intermediate classes was Br McMahon. He was a small man with an assertive streak. He was called 'basher'. Both these men survived the changes of staff in 1939.

Br Kent did not. He had been at the College since it opened in 1928. He had won the hearts and minds of all who knew him, but he travelled lightly, and simply packed his bags and was off. Only across the oval though. He went to the Juniorate. This indicated the measure in which he was held. The Provincial Council had seen his ten years work at SPC, and knew that he was an ideal man to mould the trainee Christian Brothers of the future. The Order prized obedience, and men were often watched when they were changed to see if they would fight to stay in a particular school, or if they would move on when bidden. Those who
retired without murmur were highly regarded. Kent was such a man.

By 1939, SPC had two lay teachers. The previous year Mr J.G. Matthews joined the staff after retiring from the State system. He was to teach grade five for the next decade. (47) Joining him this year was a Mr Wienke, who was to teach first year. (48)

Uniforms were still the badge by which St Patrick's was known. According to 'Crich':

The sober grey suit which the College adopted in 1936 has been adopted by most of the big schools and Colleges in Sydney. This particular colour is admirably suited to the climatic conditions of NSW. (49)

The Retreat for the senior boys went off as usual. However a new note was beginning to appear. The school was starting to judge its spiritual state by the number of students who choose to go into some form of Religious life, either in the Brothers or in the Priesthood.

A spirit of piety and fervour, as evidenced throughout the Retreat, indicated the spiritual status of the College... which has not diminished but rather increased in intensity, since the establishment of the annual Retreats... This is exemplified by the increasing number of aspirants to the Religious Life. (50)
The Brothers were aware that Vocations to the Religious Life would benefit the Church. In Our Studies, they were reminded in 1939, of:

...the joy experienced by the Brothers in seeing so many exemplary lives in...the priesthood or Religious life.(51)

This was an idea often in the background and so the noting of those who chose a life in the Church, became a measuring rod for the Brothers in assessing the tone of their school. Many vocations were taken to mean the school was doing its part in building up the Church in Australia.

But, there were more immediate calls on energy for the boys in St Patrick's. The cricket teams gained third place in each of the three grades. In football, the firsts

...were a thorn in the side of opposing teams and demonstrated great skill and ability.(52)

Presumably this means that they did not win too many games. The seconds did very well. They played Darlinghurst in the final game with scores equal at full time. Darlinghurst won after the bell.(53) The 5 stone 10's won the championship for the second time, going through the whole season undefeated.(54) If Br Coghlan managed a smile at this, a greater sporting triumph awaited him.
In 1939, SPC, for the first time since joining the MCC, won the shield for the Champion school in Athletics. Dress, exams, and now sport. It was the completion of the headmaster's vision of the successful school. The day had not only school triumph, but individual athletic performance at its best. There is a photo with the caption, "Win That Made SPC Athletic History". In was the 220 yards under 16. The second event of the day. From St Patrick's there was Albert Lock and from Lewisham, the State Champion J. Fawkner. The rest of the field stood little chance, and Fawkner up to last year, had always edged out Locke. With only yards to go, Albert Locke was ahead when the Lewisham boy threw himself at the line, only to stumble. In a record time of 22.9 seconds, St Patrick's had its first 8 points on the score board. (55) In the 100 yards, Fawkner set himself for revenge, but lost for the second time, to a new record of 10.3 secs. Albert Locke that day ran inspired. So did J. Harding in the 100 under 14, B. Maguire in the 200, G. Wootton in the broad jump under 16 and the 90 yards hurdles. Pat Dowling took the high jump under 14, and in the open broad jump, Ken Austin jumped 19 ft 11 ins. to surprise himself, his rivals, and those who had seen him jump previously. Finally John Ferris took the under 14 broad jump. (56) The triumph did not end that evening.
The following day the team was presented to the assembled school, and Br Coghlan spoke about the great day.(57) It took 'Crich' to sum it all up; 'the College met with unprecedented success'.(58)

The concert that year had wider appeal than simply the SPC parents:

...the thirty items on the programme were well received by a very responsive audience which included many Brs (sic) of other Orders whose motives for their coming is better known to themselves...it is pleasing to learn that others adopt our practices to their own ends.(59)

These ambiguous intruders must have enjoyed seeing John Ferris, the broad jumper, sing a duet with Mick Toohey, and Albert Locke, the prince of sprinters, play Greenbottle the harrassed schoolmaster.(60) But they might have smirked when Mr Scott, the gymnastic instructor, blew the whistle for 'steady' as the last boy clambered to the top of the human pyramid. He didn't make it, instead, and in front of the packed hall, he slipped and crashed to the floor.(61)

There was no crashing in the examinations that year though. Fifteen Boys passed the Leaving and fifty-nine the Intermediate. One of the boys, Norman Rogers had eight A's.(62) That Year Lewisham had thirty-five, a record, undertake the Leaving and fifty-four sit for the Intermediate, without any one making the eight-A
grade. These figures suggest that, SPC was growing steadily, maintaining standards, but still without the numbers in the senior class of its closest rival. (63)

Late 1939 brought the war. Two of those who had just passed the Leaving, John Barry and William Kennedy, and two of the boys who had just moved into fourth year, John Krone and Bruce Palme were soon to die. And there were more. But no one could know that.

The retreat went on as usual, and the next paragraph in the Annals records:

"The number aspiring to Religious Life keeps increasing and now we have ten ex-students training for the priesthood and five have joined the Christian Brothers. (64)"

The spiritual health of the school was becoming increasingly tied to the numbers joining the Church. It seemed taken for granted that the two were unquestionably linked. St Patrick's was contributing to the 'Church Triumphant'.

The war was making intrusions in the school. A local group, 'The Strathfield Citizens' General Purposes' Committee used the College woodwork facilities every Monday night, and under the direction of the old digger 'Crich', made things for the war effort and for the Red Cross. (65)
Sport continued in the school with enthusiasm. The Cricketers did not do well, but the footballers showed reasonable form. The first XIII were second in the MCC competition, the seconds won the premiership, and then defeated a team selected from the best of the other schools. The 5th 10's shared equal first place with Lewisham, when neither team managed to score in the grand final. The trip to Wollongong on August 15 took place as usual, with SPC winning all the grades. In Athletics, Mr Holborow continued to produce champion teams. Albert Locke won the 100, 220, 440, 880 events in the open. Each year in the MCC an honour cap was given to the open athlete scoring most points. The boy Kenna from Lewisham was ahead on field events and placings, and the 880 was to decide the prize. Albert had not intended running in the distance races, but G. Jenkins the SPC 880 runner, stepped aside and Albert trailed the field for most of the race sprinting in the straight to take the coveted honour cap. Denis Mahoney in the under 16's won the 440, hop step and jump, and was placed into the 100 and 220 events. For the first time, a mile was included, and Ray Moore, won the event:

...in which he revealed grit, and fine stamina, indicative of his type.

Every single open's event was won by an SPC boy.
During this year Archbishop Kelly died. The body lay in state in St Mary's while thousands filed past. All the Orders of Brothers marched in the funeral procession around a city block then back to the crypt of St Mary's where the body was buried.(70)

The exam results from 1940 were adequate. There were nineteen Leaving and fifty-eight Intermediate passes. No one managed eight A's.(71) The end of the year saw Br Robinson changed to St Enda's Juniorate. He had spent twelve years at SPC, and taught from the junior to the senior classes. He was an enigmatic figure, retiring, but able to hold the enthusiasm of his classes despite his shyness.

The retreat for 1941 saw all the boys in the school down to sixth grade silently following the exercises set by the priests. Vocations were increasing and described as:

...God's visible confirmation of the sound healthy atmosphere permeating a school.(72)

In this year the College Oval was officially opened. But it was not quite the triumph it might have been under Br Breen. When he arrived and saw the oval: ...

...Br J.V.Coghlan would have nothing to do with it till near its completion.(73)
In his first year, Br Coghlan had appointed two men full time to look after the work, and there are only passing mentions of it in the following years. When the Oval was finally opened no one from the working Bee which had spent week after week in Breen's time was invited. There was, according to Br Kent, 'consequent disappointment'.(74) It just had to be swallowed. Coghlan was not a man to give apologies. The Oval ready and with Athletics the most successful sport in SPC, it was surveyed by Mr P Walsh of the AAA and the running tracks all correctly sited.(75)

Sporting teams met with little success in 1941. The first XI under Norman Rogers showed 'true fighting spirit'.(76) The footballers failed to win any premierships. Athletics was the single area of achievement. Denis Mahoney won the open 100, 220 double, John Ferris the high jump and hop, step and jump under 16. John Beaumont the 100, 220 under 14 and Clem Mitchelmore the under 10 races. SPC won the Aggregate, the junior and the Juvenile cups, and had won the Aggregate every year since 1939.(77) It seemed as if the College was almost unbeatable at Athletics.

It was not all sport. Miss Leach was teaching piano and violin and her boys were doing well. Miss Kinkead managed the verse speaking, and there were nine first
places in the annual Christian Brothers' eisteddfod.(78)

Exam results in the Leaving Certificate were rated that year as 'the most Brilliant ever'.(79) Denis Mahoney obtained a maximum possible pass. He had first class honours in History and Chemistry, was third and fourth in the state in these subjects, for the rest he got straight A's. Neil McNevin also had two first class honours, and was third in the state in English, John Ferris had first class honours in Physics and was second in the state. Thirty boys passed the Leaving, this was only just behind the record for Lewisham thirty-five, and obviously the cry in Lumen, referring to 1941, 'Beat it if you can'. (80) suggested something of the jubilation that crowned Br Coghlan's final year as headmaster.

Br John Vincent Coghlan had been extraordinarily successful. He had seen the school grow from three-hundred to five-hundred students. He had introduced a new crest and a new uniform. The SPC boys in appearance and behaviour were the equal of any in Sydney. SPC had won the cup for the champion school in athletics for the last three years. The exam results had been consistently good, and in this final year outstanding. There were no innovations, it was a
school run along traditional lines. But it was an outstanding traditional school. Any Catholic parents who wished to have their sons do well in exams; play sport and if possible represent their school at sport; dress superbly; give due attention to the devotions of the Catholic faith; could not find a better school in Sydney. This was what Coghlan left behind him as he was transferred as headmaster to St Kilda. 'Ming', who spoke so little, never reached for anything beyond his grasp. He knew what he wanted, insisted on it, and because it was attained, the school grew in confidence. Success, in the areas he chose, bred success.
FOOTNOTES

(1) Notes of Br K.P.Kent in the author's possession.

(2) ibid.

(3) K.D.Kane, The History of Christian Brothers' College East St Kilda, Privately Printed by St. Kilda College, 1972, p 184

(4) Br Coghlan, Speech Night Address, Lumen, Dec. 1947, p. 2

(5) Br K.P.Kent, op. cit.

(6) Mt.5,16

(7) Coghlan, Lumen, Dec. 47 p. 2

(8) House Annals 1936

(9) Interview with Mr Ted Healey (Tim in the quote above) 20.11.87

(10) Kane, op. cit., p. 185 (This quote is from Coghlan's first Speech Night after Leaving St Patrick's in 1943, and he was not a man who changed a great deal.)

(11) ibid., p. 186-7

(12) ibid., p. 192

(13) ibid., p. 192

(14) Interview with Ted Healey, 20.11.87

(15) ibid.

(16) House Annals 1936, (Account from unnamed newspaper pasted into book.)
(17) ibid.
(18) ibid.
(19) ibid.
(20) ibid.
(21) ibid.
(22) ibid.
(23) Lumen, May 1947, p. 8
(24) Interview with Ted Healey, 20.11.87
(25) CBER, 1986, p. 438
(26) ibid.
(27) Lumen, August 1947, p. 40 ('Ramblings from Five Years at SPC, 1937-41', Neil McNevin)
(28) Lumen, December 1948, p. 14 ('Fifteen Years at SPC', John Ferris)
(29) ibid.
(30) ibid.
(31) House Annals 1937
(32) ibid.
(33) ibid.
(34) House Annals 1938 (The Paper is the Labor Daily. The other boys referred to would have been Jim Nash and John Guinan)
(35) House Annals 1938 (The writer is no longer Br Coghlan but "Crich". Presumably he had found favour with Coghlan. The phrasing is "Crich's".)
(36) Interview with Br J.A.McGlade, 23.11.87
(37) House Annals 1938

(38) ibid.

(39) ibid.

(40) ibid.

(41) ibid.

(42) ibid.

(43) Lumen, August 1947, p. 4

(44) Interview with L.J. Lynch 3.11.87 (His two brothers subsequently came to the school, and became prominent.)

(45) This booklet was pasted in the House Annals 1938

(46) House Annals 1939

(47) Lumen, Dec. 1946, p. 24f

(48) House Annals 1939

(49) ibid.

(50) ibid.

(51) Our Studies, May 1939, p. 11

(52) House Annals 1939

(53) Lumen, August 1947, p. 5

(54) House Annals 1939

(55) Lumen, August 1947, p. 5

(56) ibid., p. 6

(57) ibid.

(58) House Annals 1939

(59) ibid.

(60) Lumen, August 1947, (Recollections of N. McNevin) p. 40
SUCCESS 1936-41

(61) ibid.

(62) House Annals 1939

(63) Our Studies, May 1940, p. 63

(64) House Annals 1939

(65) House Annals 1940

(66) ibid.

(67) ibid.

(68) ibid.

(69) Lumen, Dec. 1947, p. 8

(70) House Annals 1940

(71) House Annals 1941

(72) ibid.

(73) Note to Annals added 1985 by Br. J.A. McGlade

(74) Notes of Br Kent in author's possession.

(75) House Annals 1941

(76) ibid.

(77) ibid.

(78) ibid.

(79) Lumen, December 1947, p. 9

(80) ibid.
The headmaster chosen to replace Br Coghlan, would have passed a dress inspection of 'Ming' at any hour of the day or night. So meticulous was he that he always had:

his clothes brushed, pressed and in good condition, and he was always prepared to meet visitors who might unexpectedly call in.(1)

His manner like his dress, was busy and orderly. One of the Brothers at SPC described him as a 'vivacious, dapper...Irishman'.(2) He was Br Richard Baptist Quirk and he came to Strathfield from St Pius at Chatswood where he had been headmaster.

Br Quirk had joined the Order in Ireland. He had tried to join the British army in the first world war, but his parents had refused their consent, and he had taken up a position as a cable operator in Cork.(3) He entered the Brothers in 1918 and was teaching in Australia by 1920. He had a reputation as a hard worker. Not only this, but he always seemed as if he was ready to pass some sort of snap military inspection. There was no mistaking what he thought. He was blunt, and could be impetuous. Often, he was in a hurry. Once when he was driving near Geraldton in WA, he noticed a well dressed aboriginal standing on the road looking for a lift. He stopped only to find
that the man required only a cigarette and a light. He tossed these out with little grace and a reminder that he was in a hurry and this was a waste of time.

Thanking him for the matches the recipient said:

Remember Father, JESUS CHRIST(sic) was never in a hurry. HE(sic) had time for everyone.(4)

When Br Quirk was in Strathfield, he was still in a hurry, busy about what had to be done. He was stepping into giants shoes too. Br Coghlan would take some replacing.

He faced some problems on taking over. The first was a drop in numbers. This was general in many Sydney schools, and was encouraged by the Government subsidy for families who wished to move to the country for safety.(5) The Intermediate class which had stood at sixty-five last year was now down by twenty.(6) The second was an order that trenches had to be dug in case of air-raid. At first this was fun. Then the shale made it much harder work. Eventually there were zig-zag slits in the ground, but they were never used except in a couple of practice sessions.(7) Things were soon back to the normal routine.

Br Quirk, like the previous headmasters, was clear about the place of a Retreat in the religious lives of the boys. He secured the Mount St Mary chapel, which
Crowle had once listed as part of the campus, to replace the school rooms and the whole of St Patrick's went to Mass there during the retreat. This year saw the first old boys of the College ordained as priests. There were three of them, Bob Nolan, Clem Gailey, and Edward Dunne. (8) Fr Bob Nolan said Mass for the school and visited each class, asking for God's blessing. It was a moving experience for him to wander around his old school:

The morning I said Mass at Strathfield was one of the happiest I have spent...I let my mind go back to the days when I was a pupil at St Pat's...When I walked into the rooms where I studied I got a real thrill, I pictured myself back amongst the pupils...I have a vivid recollection...of helping to build the shrine of the Sacred Heart, and how elated we all were when the covering was taken off it, and the light switched on. I lived those moments again in the few minutes I spent in that room. (9)

Old boy priests were seen as a special mark of God's favour. Three in this year were evidence that the school was fostering devotion, and that it was sending off recruits to join the ranks of the church:

...a memorable day for St Patrick's--three priests, ex-pupils...the forerunner of many to follow, an honour and a privilege, let alone the special graces accruing therefrom. Many aspirants are surging towards Springwood Seminary and K.Hatton, B.Heather, J.Calahan. K.Muldoon have entered this year. God bless them all. (10)
The phrasing is 'Crich's' but the sentiments were part of the religious outlook. St Patrick's was doing its job by adding to those in the hierarchy of the Church.

There were other aspects of Religion important in Quirk's school. He arranged for the senior students in fourth and fifth years to meet each week outside in their own time to discuss religion, and on Sundays sell Catholic Literature outside St Martha's Church. They also used to collect clothing, or other useful things and take them to the old men's home at Lidcome.(11)

This was a time when Catholic Action was important. With Br Hynde in SPC, collecting Mission money was part of coming to school. There were raffles, a daily recording of the total given, and each year the school sent off the money to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. This year it was seventy Pounds.(12)

Br Quirk encouraged the development of piety in his students and when ten boys made their first communion, he brought the ten and their parents back to the Brothers' residence and provided a communion breakfast for them all.(13)

But with Br Quirk it was not all religion. He kept the emphasis of Coghlan on sport. The new Oval was in use and the turf pitch impressed the visiting schools of the MCC so much, that they made a recommendation to
have turf wickets for all A Grade cricket matches.(14) The pitch was perhaps the best thing about the cricketing season in 1942. Lewisham dismissed the First XI for 17 runs, closed their own innings at 2-32, and put SPC in to bat hoping for an outright win. The St Patrick's side managed 48, so spoiling the outright.(15)

Football is best summed up in the words of 'Crich':

We did not disgrace ourselves but rather merited much praise and respect from our more successful opposition. Practically all grades reached semi-finals except the Firsts who showed much grit and an occasional victory over better and stronger teams. (16)

But this was only part of the story. For several years those not chosen to represent the school played in a colour competition each week. There were sixteen teams, organised in four clubs, the Kangaroos, Kookaburras, Wallabies, and Magpies. They were graded according to weight and each club had its own coloured jerseys.(17) To be selected in a College team, meant that one played in the coveted black jersey:

That colour distinguishes our College Representatives both in Football and Athletics.(18)

Much energy must have been put into grading and supervising these teams. The motivation was:
A wonderful spirit is fostered and the rudiments of football inculcated by the best means possible where every avenue is sought to encourage "team" work – an essential factor to school life and after. (19)

This was part of the general conservative outlook, that sport helped turn boys into men. Even more so during the war were martial qualities to be encouraged. There was no debate about the war. It was accepted that St Patrick's boys would enlist and be welcomed back to the school as true patriots.

Athletics were the one bright spot. For the fourth year in a row SPC won the aggregate trophy for the best school, as well as the senior shield. Holy Cross College Ryde had arrived at the Sydney Cricket Ground expecting a comfortable win in the Senior division. Harding, their sprinter, would earn sufficient points on his own to take the shield. But Mr Holborow, the athletics coach, had prepared his team carefully. In the 440 yards, Ian Templeton, in the black SPC singlet and shorts, having come second to Harding in the 100 and 200, led into the straight and hit the tape first. This was a blow to Harding. (20) But, he lined up for the 880 yds, confident. The SPC boy Fred Kyneur had other plans. He went to the front early, to surge ahead whenever Harding came at him. It proved too much, and part way through the race, the Holy Cross boy
'Crich's' woodwork display 1942.
withdrew, giving Kyneur a great win. (21) In the mile Vin O'Carrigan came in second, and there remained only the relay which SPC won to give them the Senior shield. (22) Although the Juvenile and Junior shields were narrowly lost, there was sufficient promise of victories to come. There were the Manston twins, and there was Clem Mitchelmore, who though only 11 years old had jumped 4 feet 11 and a half inches. 'Crich' thought this might be a world record. (23)

Despite this success, the war continued to occupy much attention. In both issues of the Our Studies magazine in 1942, there were articles about the war. One article held up the USSR as a model of how to treat minority groupings:

Each of the forty or more national units in the USSR enjoys a large measure of cultural and national autonomy...it seems that the only hope of ultimate success (to deal with minority groups) lies in the Soviet experiment. (24)

The other looked at some areas of education to be considered in post war Australia. (25) The Brothers of SPC were being challenged to think beyond the immediate problems by the Order's Journal. War touched St Patrick's in a more personal way. Graham Boulton who had sat in school the year before, was killed in New Guinea. He had been out of school six months.
The exam results in the Leaving Certificate were, according to 'Crich' evidence of 'a high standard of efficiency'.

(26) But as he goes on to refer to the success of the boys of the previous year at University, it is difficult to judge the efficiency.

(27) Thirty boys passed the Leaving in SPC, forty-one in Lewisham, and only forty in Waverley. As far as the numbers were concerned, SPC had almost caught up with the bigger Christian Brothers' schools.

(28) In the Intermediate, the results, numerically, 'eclipsed previous records with seventy-five passes against fifty-eight last year'.

(29) Two boys, P. Miller and P. O'Connor had passes of eight A's.

(30) This was better than Lewisham which managed no one with such a pass.

(31) The emphasis on exam achievement, was being maintained.

The war became much more important in the consciousness of the school during 1943. The School magazine Lumen was published for the first time. The name was suggested by 'Crich' and approval given by Br Quirk.

(32) The magazine had from the its beginning a section given over to the Old Boys of the College. In this first issue it concerned where they were serving in the war. There is a tone of adventure, almost jauntiness that would disappear as the casualty list grew. One of them wrote:
The boys overseas are proud of St Pat's., and I think that before this war is over, St. Pat's. will have reason to be proud of them.(33)

Places and terms never before in the school consciousness were being thrust into prominence. 'New Guinea' was the first heading on the Old Boy's page, then 'RAAF', 'RAN', 'AIF', there were pilots of 'spitfires', John Dirou was a POW in Malay (sic).(34)

It seemed as if SPC was advancing the allied cause as much as any school, and in this way too, the school was contributing to society. But darker news kept breaking through and arresting easy complacency. Bill Kennedy and Frank O'Grady had been killed over Germany, and Frank McEgan had been reported missing in an air raid over the same country.(35) Brs McGlade, Murphy, and Hynes had taught these boys, and strangely outlived them. Then there was 'Crich'. He alone, knew from experience what it was like. There must have been silent weeping in a man normally so cheerful, who had tried to prevent the Somme ever occurring again. Each issue of Lumen was to bring another name, in a school just fifteen years old, of one more boy dead.

The headmaster was active around the grounds. He had planted a bed of roses outside the 'Ark', had tagged each rose, and was enjoying his new found skill as a gardener.(36) He was however, not well. A chest
complaint troubled him all year. (37) He struggled to stay well enough to run the school.

There came to the community that year Br Richard Majella English. He was to become a legend, but in that first year there were only glimpses of the man who would emerge. He, like 'Jim' McGlade, would be called by his first name. To a generation of boys he would be known simply as 'Dick' English. Right from the start the senior maths classes got the message that 'Dick' meant business. There was about him, a quick colouring that suggested his big frame would be put to use pretty quickly if any boy had the temerity to answer back, or fail to do set work:

There were flashes of annoyance and an inflexibility of mind that...went to make up the man...firmly determined on his way....He was obstinate, he once admitted....intractible. (38)

Yet with this refusal to budge went a humour that could win an opponent, and take a joke, as when the SPC boys took the books out of his bag and placed there two 12 pound shot putts. (39) 'Dick' and 'Jim' for the next fifteen years were going to prove an unbeatable partnership in SPC.

But that was in the future. In 1943, the roll looked healthier. Numbers were up after the evacuation to the country the previous year. The College now had 547 on
the roll. (40) Quirk, despite illness, kept up the emphasis of his predecessor on deportment:

Though the ways of civil life have been almost inverted by the terrible strain imposed upon our people, we have made it our policy to interfere as little as possible with the education of our boys. Foremost, as ever, stands their training as Catholic gentlemen... Our aim is their training in Christian piety and in the practice of those virtues and ways of life that will enable them to take their place in any sphere when they have graduated from the College. (41)

This views Catholic education as producing good citizens, good Catholics certainly, but unlikely to overthrow the established order of things. It was not a time for revolutionary views.

Sport saw mixed success in cricket, and with the war, a game against the army. The captain of the team was John McDonnell. He was an exceptional boy. He had left school, joined a bank, then decided after 6 months to return to school. (42) It was a close game with the boys scoring 6-222 and the army 6-217. During this match, A. Burt made 81, and Gerald Gleeson, who had top scored in a number of games made 72. (43) In football, the second XIII won the premiership. This was Br English, 'Dick's', first year at St Patrick's. He already had his sights set on a premiership for the first XIII. He nurtured this second's team, not letting any of the players move to the firsts too
soon. (44) Athletics was no longer just a friendly trot around the paddock:

...a team was chosen to train for the Combined Sports of the Metropolitan Catholic Colleges, and work undertaken with the deliberate purpose of retaining the the School's Championship Trophy which we had held since 1939, and winning as many of the divisions as we could. (45)

SPC went on to win the School's Championship, the Junior, and the Juvenile Shields, losing only the Senior. Some of the SPC boys were already becoming sporting legends. The Manston brothers, Don and Ken, were now under 16. Don ran in that age, while Ken agreed to compete in the open. Don won the sprints and the broad and hop step and jump contests, while Ken was just edged out of first place in the open sprints. (46)

In the under 12, Clem Mitchelmore was jumping to beat the broad jump record of 15ft 7ins. His final leap was 16ft 1 and 1/2ins. He broke a record on every Jump.

But those who did not win also had their acknowledgement:

Though they did not get first places, the efforts of K. Plummer, 3rd Open 440; F. Kyneur 4th Open 880; J. Steel, 3rd Un 16 880; and J. McNamara 3rd in Mile...these boys battled for points in the most gruelling events of the day...Our reps. on the field won the sports; those off it won the war cry. (47)

There was a banquet to celebrate the fifth year in a row SPC had won the Athletics. The tables were loaded
The first school boy heroes of SPC
The Manston twins, Ken and Don.
with food, and there were even menu cards. Fred Kyneur gave a speech thanking Mr Holborow the coach, and the ladies who had prepared the feast, and then directed the team to watch some films up stairs. After the banquet finished many of the athletes needed their speed to chase the last bus down Merely Rd. (48)

The newly completed Oval suffered a setback when sixty feet of the large retaining wall facing Shortland Avenue collapsed after heavy rain. The street was covered with bricks, stones, and soil. The council eventually cleared the road, but the oval waited for some weeks before any repair work could be started. It would be some time before it was usuable again. (49)

An Air Training Corps was begun in term three with thirty boys signing up, and begining to learn morse code. It was hoped the Corps would flourish the next year. (50)

The exams results saw a record number of University Exhibitions won. There were five in Medicine, E.Bennet, K.Gray, F.Kyneur, B.McLaughlin and C.Thwaites, three in Engineering, P.Miller, P.O'Connor, and K.Plummer, and one in Science, G.Gleeson. There were also 5 State Bursaries, which topped the list of Bursaries awarded to Catholic colleges. (51)
results, were only just behind Lewisham in overall numbers, thirty-five sat the LC in Lewisham, thirty-two in SPC and Lewisham won ten University Exhibitions to St Patrick's nine. So neither the numbers nor the standard of exam passes had declined under Br. Quirk.

At the end of 1943, Br Quirk felt too ill to continue as headmaster. He was transferred to Western Australia and his place taken by Br Michael Maximus O'Connor, another Irishman, who had just finished being headmaster of St Patrick's in Goulburn.

Br O'Connor came to SPC with a reputation for hard work, Irish charm, and the capacity to keep both boys and staff busy all the time:

He was a great school man; he was a great church man; he was a great gentleman...He was not a great scholar but he had the courage, foresight, energy and humility over the years...to leave his stamp on one school and move all his dedicated attention to the next.

Leaving Goulburn was no problem, and by the Friday of the first week, Br O'Connor was addressing the boys of SPC as if he had been at the school all his life. Here was another successor to Coghlan, but with Irish eloquence:

Now what is remarkable about St Patrick's is that not for a single day has it looked back...Other schools have had their lean years, Strathfield has
never gone back...steadily year by year the roll has grown...Today we are at almost 600.(54)

Clearly Br O'Connor was using this address to inspire the school, not point out facts. Even as recently as his successor's first year the numbers had fallen. Probably, he was letting them know how good a school SPC was, and why he and they, should be proud members.

Then, O'Connor explained the motto:

Your school crest bears the motto, 'Luceat Lux Vestra.' These words are those of Christ Himself from the great sermon on the Mount...These words of Our Lord give you the reason why you should always act honourably—so that people who know the school you are from will think more of Catholic Education and the Church and eventually God himself. In buses and trains, in your home, your parish church and the streets of your own suburbs, nothing less than the very best should be the standard of your conduct.(55)

This is very explicit. Act well in public so that first the school, then the church, then God will receive praise. The school would continue to identify itself by its public image, and this would glorify God. Decorum was expected from those who chose to put on the uniform of St Patrick's. The uniform made boys into gentleman. It seemed almost to be expected that it would confer this on whoever wore it. The light that would shine would be St Patrick's, not the particular boy's. This seemed to be what the motto was about.
PARENT OCCUPATIONS 1939 -1945
SOURCE: SCHOOL REGISTER.
As well as public gentlemen the school produced many students who chose to devote their lives to serving God as members of the clergy. If it was true that 'by their fruits shall you know them' then the school was functioning well. In 1944, three more old boys of St Patrick's were ordained to the priesthood and celebrated mass for the students. This made six priests in three years. Two of last years, Clem Gailey and Robert Nolan were there to see Pat Murphy, Tom Connolly, and Kevin McGovern celebrate Mass in the Mt St Mary Chapel. It was seen as 'The greatest day ever at SPC'.

Fr Nolan preached the sermon:

As boys we came to this College knowing little...We received all, and gave nothing and left the College encouraged with the good wishes and prayers of the Brothers...today we return with the power to celebrate Mass and we feel that at last we are able to make some recompense to the Brothers for their untiring efforts.

It was generally understood that a school, which produced priests was a good school, and that it had a sound spiritual tone. It was reason for praise:

I think it is a duty to congratulate you and the school on the occasion of the ordination of Rev. Fathers Connolly, Murphy, and McGovern.

This was from another ex-student ordained to the priesthood, Fr Dunne, and it indicates that the priests saw themselves as chosen. They were not self congratulatory, but rather felt the school should be
acknowledged as one of the significant forces in their priesthood.

Other religious matters that year also claimed attention. One of these was that the centenary of the death of Edmund Ignatious Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers. Boys from all the Brothers' schools in Sydney went to a Mass in St Mary's Cathedral. So many of them that one of those attending recorded:

Boys! Boys! Boys! I never saw so many schoolboys together in my life before. Every seat...was packed with boys...It was Boys's day—boys and their teachers...a great teaching Order...an inspiring morning.(59)

The boys of Strathfield had a morning off to be part of this group, and a holiday as well.

Exams that year saw a spread of honours and 6 University Exhibitions. The photos of these boys appeared in Lumen, and a write up on each of them.(60)

In cricket the first XI were beaten only by Randwick, who also won the first, seconds and thirds in the football. Obviously Marcellin were on top in 1944.(61) The trip to Wollongong saw the 10st 7 team so impressive that they were written up as a 'dream team'. Later in the year, the same boys played a couple of matches in Sydney, but so poorly that it was suggested
that if the team were not asleep, those on the sideline were, and that must have been what was mean by 'dream team'; they put spectators to sleep. (62) The Athletics saw SPC the champion school for the sixth consecutive year. The Manston twins now seventeen were described as among the greatest schoolboy sprinters. Don Manston won the honour cap for the greatest number of points in the open division, and if he hadn't his brother Ken would have. (63) In athletics, SPC was without rival.

That year, Br O'Connor took the annual concert to the Town Hall. Even Archbishop Gilroy, who was the guest of honour, expressed surprise at the move from Ashfield Town Hall. (64) The evening was judged a great success, and the Archbishop declared that St Patrick's took its place alongside the older schools of the Brothers, Waverley and Lewisham as an equal. (65)

With all this acclaim, the war was never forgotten. There were jottings about where particular old boys were serving, and then inevitably, death. Frank McEgan was confirmed killed over Germany having not come back from a bombing raid. (66) In the later issues of Lumen that year while Bob Rooney was awarded a DFC, John Barry was killed in England when the plane he was flying crashed. John had written from London:
Perhaps I'm just browned off with all this globe trotting, but I just want to be plain John Citizen in good old Australia...I never knew a country could mean so much to a man before. I always think of my last glimpse of the eastern coastline...probably thinking like Barrie's Peter Pan, 'This will be an awfully great adventure.' (67)

Any adventure was crushed out in farewell words like this. The school could only read, and be sad. Sad too when Des Fallon was invalided back from a commando unit in New Guinea and was accidentally killed one October evening. (68)

At the end of 1944, Br O'Connor was moved to Waverley as headmaster, and Br J.V. Coghlan was returning to SPC for a second term as headmaster. He would not find many things to undo. It would be business as usual for the next six years.

POSTSCRIPT

Br Coghlan returned to find little in the school different and able to take up where he left off. It was almost as if he had never been away. He remained in charge until 1950. During this time, sporting and exam success continued, the boys remained as impressive in their appearance as ever, and the school with twelve years of such insistence formed patterns that have never been broken. Its boys, without any
awareness of Br Coghlan, dressed with uncharacteristic schoolboy neatness.

In 1951 Br Garvey came to St Patrick's from Aquinas College, in Perth. The school now had a roll call of nine-hundred and twenty boys. There was no evidence of self analysis. When the St Patrick's boys marched through the city Br McGlade recorded in the House Annals the comment of one bishop that:

The work that Religious have been doing in Australia during the past fifty years has been so outstanding as to render it unequaled in any country that I know of.

It was a time of self-congratulation among the Religious in Catholic Schools. This spirit of success crowning hard work and of the Catholics assuming their rightful place in Australia was perhaps behind a list of vocations to the Priesthood and to the Brothers drawn up in 1953. It was simply headed "Harvest" and itemised all those students from St Patrick's who had joined the Church. Such an array indicated the spirit of triumphalism at this time. A vocation to the Church was a sign of God's special blessing. A school with many vocations, had God's particular favour and could expect to prosper. It was a time with few clouds on the horizon.
Br McGlade who had been at the College for twenty years became headmaster in 1953 and saw no need to change direction. He maintained the Coghlan emphasis and added new science rooms. He kept the new additions exactly the same as the buildings already there. The dream of Hickey had grown to an impressive empire of buildings. In 1956 Br McGlade left St Patrick's to assume a role in the government of the order. He was eventually to become Provincial in NSW.

The new headmaster was Br Hodda. Short, stout, unflappable, and with a seemingly endless supply of energy. There could only be advancement under Br Hodda. He kept the emphasis on uniforms as a trademark of the school. Under Br Hodda it was the landscape that began to change. A new Brothers' monastery was built, a swimming pool, and a school chapel. These buildings were all distinct and radical departures from the old style. As well, Br Hodda was invited to membership of the Conference of Headmasters' of Australia. Thus St Patrick's had become a full member of the conservative schools' club. This set the seal on the Brothers' success in adopting the Corporate School model for their schools. There were now over one thousand pupils in St Patrick's.
In 1962 Br Hodda was succeeded by Br Hannigan. It was not a happy replacement. He was unable to get on with staff, and his inquisitorial methods caused such unrest that he was transferred before serving his term as headmaster. His successor noted that:

Br Hannigan...was not afraid to do what he considered to be the correct thing in his management of the College. In such a large organisation...situations arise unexpectedly, situations demanding either a tactful, cautious approach or a strong determined attitude...Br Hannigan was a man who never shirked his responsibilities.(71)

This replacement was Br Gygar, a peacemaker and pourer of oil. He switched the whole school from rugby league to rugby union. It was a move:

...which enabled us to meet several schools we had never previously met on the sporting field.(72)

This was a nice way of saying that St Patrick's with its membership of the Headmasters' Conference, and its roll call of fourteen-hundred students could probably move from an all Catholic competition to one with the more elitist schools of Sydney. Br Gygar also arranged for headmasters from such schools as Kings, Shore and Newington, to hold forums in the College hall to which interested parents were invited to listen.(73)

Br Casey became headmaster in 1967. He confronted the Woodstock generation of Sydney schoolboys who did not
espouse so readily the sporting ties that the school thought was best for them. In 1969, they still had short hair, but Br Casey was already expressing his confusion:

To those of us who were weaned in the poverty of the thirties, and the austerity of the forties, the affluence of the sixties is somewhat difficult to understand...young people today...have...the "pop" culture with its contemporary music, permissive sexual behaviour, modern dance forms...(74)

The hair stayed short until 1971. Discipline however was coming under more and more attack by students.(75) In sport, St Patrick's found the conservative schools were not the pushover that the MCC seemed to have become for the St Patrick's teams. The school grew in buildings. Br Casey finished the science block, added to the library and had plans for a new junior school as well as an administration centre. Despite his earlier confusion about youth, Br Casey applied 'old fashioned' standards that Christian Brothers had always judged their schools by. The hair was longer, but this was the only concession. Exams, sport, uniforms and devotional practices were kept in their position of emphasis. Without them, what would the Christian Brothers advocate? The school farewelled Br Casey with a banner proclaiming him as a 'memorable headmaster'.
Br Greening took over in 1975. He had some initial
difficulty in his relationship with staff and concluded
his first year by sacking seven of them. This left
great uncertainty and distrust. Br Greening felt that
St Patrick's was now ready to officially join one of
the sporting competitions of the conservative schools.
He vigorously pursued membership of the CAS, the
Combined Associated Schools, which were those Sydney
schools with the same ideals but later founding date
than the Great Public Schools of NSW. He was rewarded
when St Patrick's was admitted on trial with full
membership seeming only a formality. There was much
rejoicing. In readiness, the old sporting blazer was
re-introduced, tracksuits assumed a uniformity and the
appearance of the barrackers for the Saturday games was
vigorously policed. Br Greening continued the
architectural drive of his predecessors, built a
Technics block, and established a master plan for the
College's expansion in the years ahead.

Br O'Shea, succeeded Br Greening in 1980. He took some
time to adjust to his role. A new gymnasium and staff
room were built, and gardens began to appear in what
had been neglected corners. In 1983, Br O'Shea
received a letter from the headmasters of the CAS
regretting that St Patrick's was not able to be
accepted into the Association. His term was extended and he remained in the school for seven years.

The present headmaster is Br Giovanni Giacon. This is his first year. In keeping with his predecessors he has plans for building. The school enrolment remains at fourteen-hundred.
PARENT OCCUPATIONS 1987
SOURCE: SCHOOL REGISTER.
FULFILMENT 1942-5

FOOTNOTES

(1) CBER, 1962, p. 93
(2) ibid.
(3) ibid., p. 77
(4) ibid., p 89
(5) House Annals 1942
(6) ibid.
(7) Lumen, 1978, p. 21
(8) ibid.
(9) Letter in SPC Archives 27.8.42
(10) House Annals 1942
(11) ibid.
(12) ibid.
(13) ibid.
(14) ibid.
(15) Lumen, May 1948, p. 9
(16) House Annals 1942
(17) ibid.
(18) ibid.
(19) ibid.
(20) Lumen, May 1948, p. 10
(21) ibid.
(22) House Annals 1942
(23) ibid.
(24) Our Studies. May 1942, p. 18
(25) Our Studies, August 1942, p. 29
(26) House annals 1942
(27) ibid.
(28) Our Studies, May 1943, p. 39
(29) ibid.
(30) House Annals 1942
(31) Our Studies, May 1943, p. 39
(32) Lumen. May 1948, p. 11
(33) Lumen. Dec. 1943, p. 20
(34) ibid.
(35) ibid.
(36) CBER, 1962, p. 83
(37) ibid.
(38) CBER, 1965, p. 240
(39) ibid., p. 242 ff
(40) House Annals 1943
(41) Lumen. Dec. 1943, p. 2
(42) ibid., p. 8
(43) ibid.
(44) Interview with John McNamara, 23.11.87.
(45) Lumen., Dec. 1943, p. 14
(46) ibid.
(47) ibid.
(48) ibid., p. 19
(49) ibid.
FULFILMENT 1942-5

(50) ibid.
(51) House Annals 1943
(52) Our Studies, May 1944, p. 47,8
(53) CBER, 1982, p. 319
(54) Lumen, May 1944, p. 2
(55) ibid., p. 2
(56) Lumen, Aug. 1948, p. 4
(57) ibid.
(58) Lumen, Aug. 1944, p. 3
(59) Lumen, Dec. 1944, p. 3
(60) Lumen, May 1945, p. 3
(61) Lumen, Aug. 1944, p. 16
(62) Lumen, Aug. 1948, p. 5
(63) Lumen, Dec. 1944, p. 18
(64) Lumen, Aug. 1948, p. 4
(65) ibid.
(66) Lumen, May 1944, p. 19
(67) Lumen, Dec. 1944, p. 5
(68) ibid.
(69) House Annals 1951
(70) House Annals 1953
(71) Lumen, 1964, p. 8
(72) Lumen, 1965, p. 6
(73) Lumen, 1966, p. 15
(74) Lumen, 1969, p. 5
(75) Lumen, 1971, p. 9
The single issue that emerges most clearly from this case study of one school concerns the nature of a Christian Brothers' education. In St Patrick's there was teaching by individual Brothers, but it is difficult to define any common philosophy of education that they followed. Nowhere did the Order offer a systematic written policy concerned with developing an individual's capacity to become an independent, free thinking adult. Rather, the Brothers in their schools concentrated on discipline, dress, and performance in exams and sport. The educational practice of the Christian Brothers was developed in response to something outside the Order itself. From the beginning the Brothers aimed to win favourable public opinion.

If the directions of the Superiors General of the Order to the members are examined, rather than spelling out any philosophy of education peculiar to the Christian Brothers, they lay down a continual emphasis on externals, which if adhered to would result in speedy noticeable progress, but not necessarily any inner growth. Edmund Rice, the Founder of the Order, was a philanthropist. His concern to improve the lot of poor students has remained in the Order, but from the time of Rice, there has been a concern with quick progress
in public spheres. There has always, it seems, been an emphasis on orderliness. Rice for example commented in his first circular letter to the Brothers:

The Brothers were commended for the cleanliness and neatness of the houses, gardens, school, and premises...the educational effect of well-kept school establishments, in refining the taste of the scholars, could not be over-estimated.(1)

This occurs in a document only a page and a half long. It was written in 1829. Presumably in so brief a document, Rice was not going to comment on what he regarded as peripheral. Nor does he elsewhere, take the time to explain how such clean grounds refine the taste of scholars, nor why, in the Ireland of 1829, such things were thought to be of such importance. It was taken for granted that this was self-evident. Rice was a successful business man before he became a philanthropist. Most of the first generation of Brothers were older men of the same social class as Rice himself, and only one had previous teaching experience.(2) Attention to such externals may have been one of the ideas absorbed from the business world.

He goes on:

In referring to the schools, much stress was laid on the importance of maintaining silence and regularity during the movements of the children to and from classes and playground; and the observance of order in dismissing them to their homes in the evening...the good conduct of the
pupils in the streets reflects credit on the institution. (3)

There are only four letters of Rice, and in none of them does he develop any further, these ideas on education.

The emphasis on minutiae was maintained by the successor to Rice, Br Michael Paul Riordan. He wrote to the whole Order a list of precepts, but has nothing to say on the philosophy of the schools:

...the Brothers are to mark the top of their letters inside (thus +) with the sign of the cross, but it may be omitted as prudence dictate. (4)

This detailing of such trivia seems characteristic of his attitude. These are presented as matters of concern to the Brothers. Such an attitude was not likely to encourage any risky experimentation with educational ideas that may have resulted in any unfavourable views. When the Brothers took up the monitory system whereby one brother was able to look after well over one hundred pupils with the aid of more advanced students who would tutor the rest, they found this suited their regimented disciplined approach. (5)

However, they eschewed anything that might be educational for its own sake:

In Arithmetic, matters of practical utility for the purposes of life should be preferred to
speculative researches...[the Brother aims] to make his pupils practitioners rather than theorists.(6)

They stated clearly that teaching about invoices and receipts was more important than teaching about algebra.(7) To develop this practical approach the Brothers produced their own text books which paralleled those printed by the National Schools in Ireland.(8) However in this too, they were followers not innovators. They did not develop these books because they had something new to offer, but in response to a system they found not sufficiently regimented or controllable.

After another General Chapter in 1880, the Brothers were offered two paragraphs out of eleven pages on matters of schooling. The fourth Superior General Br Richard Anthony Maxwell wrote:

With regard to the schools. The Chapter desired that the attention of the Brothers should be directed to the necessity of insisting on order and propriety on the part of the children going to, and returning from school. Independent of the bad impressions made on the public mind...by the disorderly conduct of the children...Proper measures should be taken to cause the children...to behave properly...thus you will preserve the character of your establishments in the mind of the general public. (9)

Br Maxwell also wrote about the practice of saying prayers in school. His concern was with prayer certainly, but also with the observance of ritual:
The Hail Mary said at the striking of the clock is a further opportunity of strengthening this habit in children. I may here remind you of the pause recommended before making the Sign of the Cross on these occasions...the prayer should never be said hurriedly, nor should the boys be allowed to assume careless or disrespectful postures.(10)

Presumably the Brother had to both say the Hail Mary and keep an eye on the class at the same time. It would seem that the correct performance was being aimed at in the hope that genuine prayer might follow at some future date.

Any new educational directions taken by the Order would not be fundamental but only changes in the minutiae of school or community life. Such an emphasis on decorum continued Rice's attitudes towards having neat houses and well kept grounds.

It seems clear from all this that the Brothers' schools, were as conservative in outlook as was the public opinion they were seeking to win. They did not aim to be innovative, but to offer practical opportunities to advance in life. The Merchant who founded them, was interested in helping the poor to gain a better standard of living, not become revolutionaries. The Christian Brothers in St Patrick's have been faithful to Rice's aims. They have striven hard to help their students to do well.
The Sydney scene into which St Patrick's was born was ready for the sort of school the Brothers offered. There was a conservative Archbishop in charge who wanted steady quiet advancement for his people. The Catholic people themselves wanted the same steady economic advancement. Good schools would help boys into secure positions. So, although they were working class people judged by occupation, the parents of the St Patrick's boys never offered any criticism that the Brothers were lifting their sons above their status. They wanted the same thing. There was a happy conjunction of aspirations.

The Brothers were doing what they had always done, and what Catholic parents had wanted. They were great imitators, not innovators, and they imitated the corporate schools with consummate success. Despite SPC having five headmasters in the first sixteen years the school maintained co-herence. What happened in SPC could have happened anywhere. Almost every Christian Brothers' school claimed similar success to St Patricks. Christian Brothers had such a regimented, life style that it didn't matter which school they were sent to, they did things in the same way and encouraged their students to be successful. This came to be thought of as a Christian Brothers' education. St
Patrick's was not unique, it was simply a well run school in imitation of the conservative boys' schools brought out from England. Though headmasters changed frequently, they tended to all have the necessary drive and energy to continue advancing the prominence attained by the school. And, they had no radical ideas which would run contrary to the pursuit of public acclaim. This was the pragmatic approach of the Christian Brothers.

The boy who came to St Patrick's generally remained grateful for the education he received. The school enabled him to make his way in life. He was given the chance to be successful because he was made to work, and taught to be neat and dependable, virtues that conservative society valued. St Patrick's offered an imitation of the English Public school within a Catholic framework. Also, it was cheap. This was one of the reasons for the later gratitude of old boys. They had been offered success at bargain prices, and appreciated the Brothers hard work on their behalf.

In summary a Christian Brothers' education involved close teaching, good public image, and an emphasis on the devotional practice of religion. St Patrick's gave its boys the chance to move into employment opportunities often denied to their parents. It was 'a
good school' because it could be relied on, it did not offer any unsettling views, or threaten the good name of Catholics. It offered success, at the price of hard work. Its origins were working class, but it always aspired to move beyond this origin. This energy to move came from both the parents who sent their sons to the school, and the Christian Brothers who taught there.
FOOTNOTES


(3) Circular Letters, op. cit., p. 1

(4) ibid., Br Riordan 1841 p. 6

(5) Gillespie. op. cit., p. 26–7

(6) ibid., p. 38

(7) ibid.


(9) Circular Letters, op. cit., Br. Maxwell, 1880, p. 43

(10) ibid., 1887. p. 93
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O'Dea, J. 'Recollections of The Early years at SPC 1929-32', written material sent to the author.

INTERVIEWS

These were usually short. Often some point from written sources needed clarification. Notes were taken after the interviews.

Ballesty,P.,  16.2.88 (former student during Br Coghlan's time)

Crohan, Br.L.S.,  23.10.86 (trainee under Br Hickey)

Dean, Br.B.,  4.3.88 (former teacher under Br Coghlan)

Good, A.  3.3.86, 5.3.86, 6.3.86, 30.10.86, 10.2.87 (first day student in 1928)

Greening, Br.W.B.,  4.11.86 (former headmaster of college)

Healey,T.E.B.,  3.11.86, 9.6.87, 29.10.87, 18.11.87 (teacher under Br Coghlan)
Keenan, Br. A.I., 30.10.86, 2.11.86, 20.11.86, 3.2.87, 7.2.87, 10.3.87, (Provincial Archivist Mt. St. Mary, Strathfield)

Glendenning, L., 9.3.88 (former student under Br. Coghlan)

Lynch, L. P., 24.1.88 (former student under Br. Coghlan)

McGlade, Br. J.A., 20.10.86, 27.10.86, 9.4.87 (former teacher and later headmaster at College)

McNamara, J., 23.11.87 (former student under Br. Coghlan)

Murphy, Br. M.L., 18.8.87 (former teacher at College under Brs. Green and Coghlan)

O'Dea, J., 13.3.87, (former student 1929-32)

O'Farrell, Br. K.B., 23.10.86 (trainee under Br. Hickey)

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