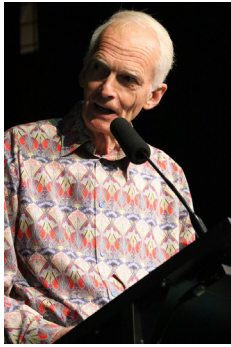


## ABHS OLD BOYS NEWS



Mr Christopher Kent, President of the ABHS Old Boys Club, was the guest speaker at the recent HSC High Achievers Formal Assembly. See his speech to the assembly below as well as some photos.

Good morning Mr. Grant, staff, students, Award recipients and parents.

Thank you Adam for your introduction. When Adam said I am a pioneer student of this school that means I was in the first enrolment group. Enrolling then was a different experience to the one you had. There were about 300 of us new students and 20 staff, but there was no school. This site was uninhabitable as it was a construction zone, much like the new home unit sites you passed on your walk from the station this morning. Cranes, mounds of earth, foundations, walls and plenty of construction noise. But no school. My group of students were billeted south of here, at Chatswood High School where there were some spare classrooms.

Later we moved to some classrooms saved from a bushfire that had burnt out an older school on the site where Hornsby TAFE now stands. That bushfire had destroyed a lot of property in Hornsby a few years earlier.

I tell you this because right from the beginning I was impressed by the enterprise and commitment of that group of teachers who gave us lessons with practically no resources in classrooms that only had chairs, tables and a chalkboard. What has changed is that today you have access to some of the best facilities, including the new science labs that were opened just last year. What has not changed is the enterprise possessed by your teachers and the commitment they have to your future.

Students and staff eventually moved into this then new school, later that year in June 1960.

Your Senior Prefect, referred to my editing the Asquith Boys High School Old Boys Newsletter. That is sent to approx 1000 former students and former teachers of this school. A few of those teachers I'm proud to say were my teachers at this school. I know what some of you are thinking. If this bloke speaking to us now is in contact with his teachers they must be very old. Well they are in their 80s and 90s, but their interest in our school remains. Many of those who have studied or taught here are now living in other states of Australia or other countries. They enjoy reading of your academic and sporting achievement. They enjoy reading about how you meet the challenges open to you in your classroom, and along the many other paths you have for learning here. Whether it be through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, fundraising for Legacy, getting involved with the Student Council or sporting and cultural tours, to name a few.

During that first year of high school for me, my dad bought a set of plans to build a wooden kayak. We built the kayak in our garage during our spare time. It required a lot of learning, as we hadn't done anything like that before. We finished the build. My brother and I used that kayak on a river near our home during school holidays. We built a trolley using some old pram wheels to transport the kayak to the river, as it was a heavy wooden one. My interest in kayaking has continued, as those engendered during our school years often do.

One year recently I entered the Hawkesbury Classic Kayaking event. Contestants paddle 111km overnight from Windsor to Brooklyn down the Hawkesbury River. I won my age section for that event. Not because I was the fastest paddler but because I prepared well by training for the event. Other contestants in my section dropped out. They had not factored in how cold it gets on the river overnight, how important it was to fuel themselves by snacking out during the event or because they had not done enough practice. I had what I regard as my Stephen Bradbury moment. For those of you who have not heard of Stephen Bradbury, he is the Australian speed skater who won a gold medal at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002. Stephen like me was the single remaining competitor at the finish as all others had dropped out or fallen over. My achievement does not compare to the significance of Stephen's achievement. He won the first gold medal to be won by an Australian, in any Winter Olympics. His passion for his sport, determination to overcome numerous obstacles including several serious ice skating injuries and practice, practice and practice, prepared him well to achieve his success.

The HSC Award recipients sitting in front of us today have also triumphed over setbacks and have been thorough with their preparation, in order to achieve the success they now enjoy.

They join the ranks of 100s of other students whose academic achievement is recognised by being written into the School's Honour Book. This records students who have topped the State in individual subjects or have achieved very high grades in several subjects. One of last years successful HSC students will speak with us shortly and possibly reveal the secret of their success. I won't be surprised to hear him speak of the importance of choosing the subjects you like and are good at, (when you have that opportunity) and getting started early with your preparation. That means starting in year 8, 9 and 10, not leaving it till you get to your senior school years.

Congratulations to you high achievers. Congratulations to your family also who have supported you in your achievement. Wishing you every success with the next stage of your learning.

I'll finish by referring to a School publication of 40 years ago. This one is an annual journal published in 1978. In it are many articles outlining events of that year as well as student art, writing and cartoons. I looked to the page where year 12 students are listed,

wondering if I recognised names of those known to have achieved success for their communities after their time at this school. I see the artwork on the cover of this journal was done by Stan Kohlhardt. Stanley is now a senior surgeon in the Thornbury Hospital in Sheffield UK. Stanley still holds some of our School's Athletics records. I do know that some of you athletes, sitting here today are in training to knock back more of Stan's old records this year, as you have done in recent years. Michael Kelly, had a career as an officer in the Australian army. He has been awarded many military medals for tours of duty in other countries. He was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia only 16 years after graduating from this school. Michael is now a Member of the Australian parliament, representing the Eden Monaro Electorate in NSW. Another student, Graeme Carroll is listed on the School's CHS Blues Honour Board. Graeme has represented Australia in swimming events and is now head coach for the Australian Institute of Sport Paralympic swimmers. When in year 12, Bruce Miller entered his essay on Japan's relations with Australia into a national competition. His essay, which is published in this journal, won that Australia wide competition. Bruce went on to become Australia's ambassador to Japan for 6 years, finishing that role just last year. Rodney Somerville, the School Captain of that year is currently the President of the Orange Planetarium in Country NSW.

With this conclusion, I hope it is possible for you to see that all students of this school can achieve interesting and worthwhile futures, in Australia or overseas. It's a great time in your life, you live in a great country and attend a great school. Will you make the most of it?

I wish you all, every success with your endeavours in the year ahead.



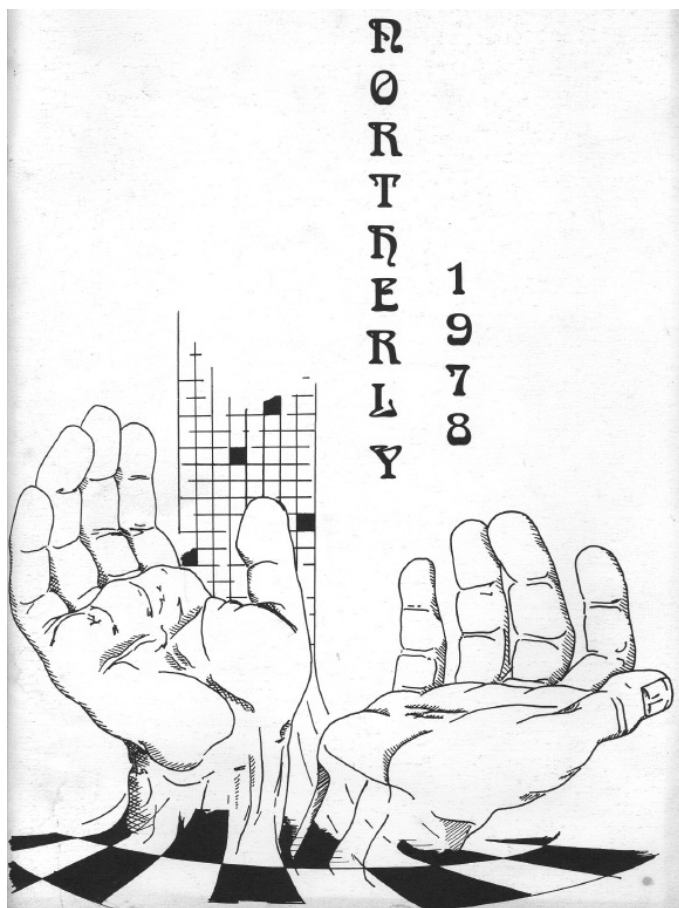
Construction continued during the School's 2nd year, 1961. E block, foreground with TAS Block (Industrial Arts) in the background.



Deputy Principal, John Holme (left) with Principal Mervyn Brown, inspect progress of E block during construction in 1961.



School Hall under construction. 1961.



Artwork by student Stanley Kohlhardt for the cover of the School Annual journal, 40 years ago. Stanley is now a senior surgeon at Thornbury Hospital, Sheffield UK.