

"THE BY GONE DAYS" By Doris Sickerdick

In 1925 it was decided by the Congregation to form a committee to reopen the Lutheran Day School here at Lobethal. By 1928, the Premier, Mr. Playford and Pastor Lutze together with the Committee had overcome most of the obstacles that stood in the way. At the beginning of the new school year in 1930, everything was ready and a teacher from Eudunda was called. He accepted the call and by the grace of God he became our Head Teacher. His name was Mr. Brueggemann and he was 6 feet 7 inches tall. He had such big hands that he could hold 5 ping-pong balls at once, one between each finger, and furthermore, make them all disappear again. He wore a size 14 boot and wore only black knitted socks.

So we go back over the years and the days I remember so well. These are days I am sure will never be forgotten. 50 years have rolled by and there are many things we must be thankful for. Thankful for the fact that we are ruled by, "I salute the flag, the Union Jack, I love the British Empire", and the promise to serve and obey were the words that had to be honestly repeated every morning for 5 days of the week all during my school days. How lucky that we still have the freedom of religion, honoured to everyone who belongs to the British Empire.

Thus our day began and was continued by all the school kids lining up for inspection - from this I believe the Army got its ideas! We had to show our hands, fronts and backs, nails had to be clean and cut short, and the boots had to be clean and shiny enough for the teacher to see himself in them. Every strand of hair had to be in place. By the way, the Kerber boys, Clarrie and Vern never got into any boot trouble, because they never wore any. Summer and winter they came to school in bare feet. Strangely enough, they were never sick either. They were real tough little fellows. Then often it was ear inspection and if there were carrots growing from any ear or shooting out the other, the ear would get a good tug, and believe me, the soil inside would get hotter and the carrots were soon get rid of.

Now we are ready to march into school, led by a boy carrying a hunk of steel in a triangular shape in one hand, and walloping it with another lump in the other hand. Look out for any kid who marched in out of step. Sometimes it was hard to keep in step because we stumbled a fair bit over pine roots before we made the grand entry through the opening of the big sliding iron door, very similar to those you see on big shearing sheds.

Well now we are all in school sitting in our long desks, all 7 in a row. At the top there was an ink well in front of each kid, and a book housing was just beneath, and believe me, if there were too many big books sitting on the little books you dare not move. All the books could tumble down, clean miss the lap and on the floor they went, pencils, rubbers and all fell out, and if the kid who sat along side you didn't have his stacked neatly, there would be a double calamity. They would come out as well.

Then after the roll call of who was there or who was not there came the most important lesson of the day, Religious Instruction, where we had to learn every text and chapter off by heart. This meant Luther's Small Catechism and the Bible History and hymns were to be word perfect. Then we had our weekly Friday tests and many things were learned and said in parrot fashion. Believe me, there was the foundation that not everyone has today, but we had as children. God is our Creator and we must believe in Him to be saved. This is the one thing needful; and that of course was the main reason for the re-opening of this school 50 years ago, the reason for this celebration. No doubt we have had a wonderful privilege and wonderful opportunity to get the Christian instruction which our parents had hoped to get for their children. How thankful we must be that our rulers of government would grant this to us. By the grace of God this has remained so all this time and we hope and pray will remain so until the end of time.

Well, onto our next lesson, which was a weak subject to a lot of us, except the real clever ones who knew everything. Doing long division, square root and algebra took so much energy out of the brain that we could hardly think what came next.

Now came the best time of all - recess - and there were kids scooting around in all directions, on the old cemetery, and playing hide and seek amongst the pines, tomb stones, wild broom and lucerne. Plenty times the bell rang to return to class, but there were still some kids missing, still hiding from the seekers. Some brave kids by now had even climbed the pine trees where they got a better view of the town. Recess time always went by so quickly and back into the class room we stumbled. Work soon began. There were spelling, dictation, composition, a few of my favourites. When it came to history, why we had to learn all about Queen Boadicea, and how she ran her chariot at top speed, with a huge blade sticking out of its wheels, and chopped off all the people's legs, is something I don't understand. Nevertheless, because we learned it, we remembered it. Also that the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066 and Sir Walter Raleigh was the first bloke to introduce the potato to England. Of course Australia had to copy, and I'm sure that's the reason for so

many good potato growers now, the best ones coming from this school - Schuberts, Graebers, Kerbers, Nuskes, Foxs and Sickerdicks. They all became big heroes in the potato industry and kept the Board alive. Just as well that dinner time comes around fairly quickly after recess, because most of the kids had bladder trouble. No sooner were they in for class and up went their hands and the demand, "Please, Teacher, may I leave the room?" Considering that the old tin dunny, housing plenty of old Chronicles, Advertisers and red back spiders was at the far end of the school ground over in the southern corner across from the Church that took a fair while to get there. There was quite some organization, spreading paper over the seats which were most times wet, doing your business and reading the paper. Time soon moves on and by that time there could be at least a half dozen kids out there all diving for the cleanest seat (there were only 2 of them). Teacher later became wise and wondered why so many kids were away from the classroom together. He got a brain-wave and organized a huge chart made out of brown paper, hanging it behind the double wooden door with all the kids names. Each time you left the room you had to put a cross mark by your name and whoever left the room the most times had to clean the dunnies after classes on Friday afternoons.

Anyhow, by now it was dinner time and all the kids gobbled down their big slice of Dienelt's bread, which was then bought for 4 pence a loaf, and one slice just fitted into the school bag. A great favoutite for sandwich spread was plum jam, but if you were lucky and a bit richer you could have a piece of mettwurst as well. I was a great friend of Sylvira Nuske. In later years she became a Pfitzner, but I always envied her because every Friday she was allowed to buy one of Eizenburg's beautiful pasties for 5 pence. The smell of that pastie almost made me feel like swapping my bread and jam and doing a trade with her. There was Lorna Sickerdick, who married into the Seidel family. When she was coming to school she often had an extra penny to spend because her father was the local milk man. He ran his business cheap with a horse and cart, so for that penny Lorna could buy 1 penny worth of common mixture lollies and share them with Sylvira and me. No wonder we were such good friends. I remember too, those lovely juicy blood oranges that Harry Nuske used to buy for his kids. Think he must have had shares in the Riverland. They were so juicy it would run down Sylvira's sleeve and arm and drip on the floor. That's what I felt so sorry for. I wish I could have licked it all up.

Well after the kids had taken all their tucker out came all the wattle sticks for a good game of Tip Cat. In that game you had to be an accurate hitter. Tip Cat was made out of a lump of wood about 6 inches long, squared off on the 4 sides and had the numbers 1,2,3 and 4 carved on the sides. It was sharply pointed at both ends and with that wattle stick you tried to make a strike and tip the end of the Cat. Up through the air it would fly at high speed, either going over the Church roof or clean through the window. If your shot wasn't so good you'd get one of the kids in the ear or his teeth, or anywhere. Then there was the game of Vigero. It looks something like the game of cricket. It was played with a soft ball. Girls and boys both played this game. It was introduced by Teacher Brugemann's sister Isabel, who came down from their home town in Queensland. Not forgetting the good game Rounders. Many a ball fell into the Church and school gutterings, or got lost in amongst bushes and shrubs in the Cemetery. So sports went on. Not forgetting marbles, mainly keeps, but that was soon banned, because all the smart kids got all the allies and the slack ones had none. Then there was Hop Scotch, where we had a good chance to wear out our old boots. Rest assured, once they showed signs of wear, father would get hold of those boots at night and next day you'd get to school the feet much more tired, because the boots got heavy with hob nails and boot protectors.

Well, back to the classroom we had to march again. The first lesson after dinner was singing. Mr. Brugemann always claimed you could sing a lot better with a full stomach. There were sopranos and altos, but the boys, well, they all sounded the same, but then some boys couldn't sing much anyway. There was Leo (Boxer) Frahn, his voice kept changing all the time. We were particularly tuitioned in part songs, trouble was we could never find our right part because there were 4 of them. Lightly Row and Down By The Station were great favourites and were well sung, good enough for any amateur concert. The weather chart was a great feature in my time. The map of Australia was a permanent part of the blackboard and was filled out with arrows and circles and lines falling into all directions every morning. There were some things called isobars and highs and lows. These highs and lows follow each other across Australia from west to east at the rate of about 500 miles per day. Therefore, because we learned about all these strokes and arrows, the school even produced extra good weather forecasters or prophets. I, by the way, married the best one. If I say it's hot, Clive would say it's cold. If I'd say it's raining, he would say the sun is shining, but you know he is more right than wrong. Teacher Brugemann was an expert in drawing. He used to bring along vases, pannikins, jugs, basins and the like. used to bring along vases, pannikins, jugs, basins and the like.

draw in pencil. The shading of these articles had to be good and exact and the pencil had to have just the right point to do this. Sometimes we would sharpen so much, that the tip seemed to continually break and by the time we got to the drawing, we found we had no pencil left. Well, there were other lessons too. There was geography, grammar, mental arithmetic and poetry. Actually, the only piece of poetry I can remember went like this:

Once upon a time on a border of a brook,
Sat a funny little froggy, sho had never read a book,
Never read a story or a funny little rhyme,
With a sad and sudden ending, once upon a time.

If things didn't always go right between the teacher and pupil they would get their punishment, and that strap of teacher Bruegge:ann was no exception. It consisted of a thick length of leather with a slit up the centre. If you got that on the hand or legs, you'd have two red streaks and a pale bit running up the centre. Lorna Sickerdick (Seidel), she had a lucky escape once. When she had to get her punishment, she put out her hand ready for the down strike. All of a sudden she fainted and slid under the desk and Teacher cleaned missed her.

Now it was almost time to pack up our books and call it a day. But before doing so we all had to sing:

Let our going out be blessed,
Bless our entrance in like measure;
Bless, o Lord, our toil and rest,
Bless our bread, our griefs, our pleasure;
Be in death Thy blessing given,
And make us blessed heirs of Heaven.

After the singing we all said, "Good afternoon, Sir". But then for the less fortunate kids. Some had to stay behind and do a lot of their work over again, mainly correcting sums and spelling. For any of the kids who had been naughty or disobeyed during the day, they had to swing the broom around in the school and iron porch. The dust flew, and the school was clean again for the next day.

O, by the way, we did have afternoon recess too, but no-one had any food left by then. Often, before we walked home for miles, we had to buy a loaf of bread from Dienelt's to take home so we could get our lunch cut for the next day. Hunger often got the better of us, and there was mainly the crust left by the time we got home. Then we could expect some form of punishment when we got to the door, on top of our hard day at school. But it all helped to make our day and the next morning we set off from home, with a tummy full of porridge and growing pains running up the legs. but we had to be ready to start a new day.

The school at the beginning only had one classroom and opened with 55 children present. Then during the year the number rose to 70. The first year, Mr. Brugemann taught by himself, but then by the following year, it seemed necessary to have an assistant. This position was capably filled by Annette Lutze (now Mrs. Martin Sickerdick) working for the love of the Church and school for one year. From then on several more members of Pastor Lutze's family taught, but as the years went on more assistant teachers were added. As it stands at the present day there is a Principal and there are 5 assistant teachers, a librarian, a secretary and teacher aide. There are 139 children attending school. For several years in the 1930s, both teachers taught in the one classroom. Then a partition was installed, making a division between grade 1,2 and 3, and 4,5, 6 and 7. The children couldn't see one another, but could still be heard. This didn't seem to mar their studies in any way. Both teachers had wonderful patience. Since those years, the school has expanded and grown to what you see today. By God's grace, and a lot of hard work and money over the last 50 years, we can see almost a dream school, a wonderful example for any school stands here before us. If our forefathers could only see how the school has grown over the years to what it is today they would proudly say how worth while all their labours had been, even if the starting point was hard and a great challenge lay before them. They would be thankful to their Lord for all the goodness He bestows, and thankful that their children could be taught and brought up in the Christian faith. What a child has learned in his youth, he won't forget when he is old. May God continue to bless all the teachers and children, and may He fill the hearts of all members with love, that the school may continue to bring forth good and faithful citizens in all walks of life.

Thankyou, dear Heavenly Father, for helping and guiding all of us throughout our lives, and for our Lutheran Primary School, and the foundation we received there.

Doris Sickerdick