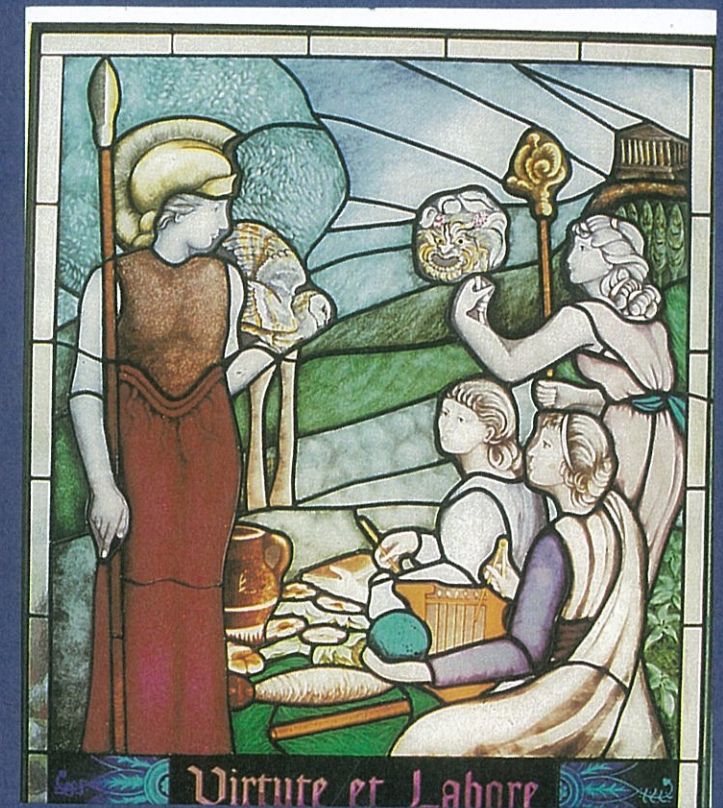


*MENTONE GIRLS'*  
*SECONDARY*  
*COLLEGE*



*1955* - *1995*



*VIRTUTE ET LABORE*

## THE EVOLUTION OF A GIRLS' SCHOOL

*A CELEBRATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF  
MENTONE GIRLS' SECONDARY COLLEGE  
1955 - 1995*



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*AUTHOR: PATRICIA CERNI*

*Mrs. Cerni joined the staff in 1957  
and retired December 1994*

## The Figures Speak for Themselves

	1955	1995
STUDENTS	337	1,030
TEACHING STAFF	15	97
OFFICE STAFF	1	4.5
CLASSROOMS	None - 20	58
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	50 - 36	26
NUMBER OF FORMS	8	39
SUBJECTS TAUGHT	14	61
LIBRARIANS	None	3.5
LIBRARY BOOKS	None - 200	25,000 +
AREA OF ACCEPTABLE PLAYING SPACE	None	15,000sq.m.
PREFECTS	6	None



Nina Carr, Amy Wert ( College Captain 1991), Lesley Boston

1955 - 1995

## Dedication

This booklet was produced to commemorate the first forty years of Mentone Girls' Secondary College and to trace its evolution from Girls' School to Girls' High School to Girls' Secondary College and now a Pilot School of the Future.

It is dedicated to all members of the school community and the wider social community who have contributed to the development of Mentone Girls' Secondary College from its inauspicious "cabbage patch" beginnings to its present status as one of the few surviving girls' schools in the forefront of academic and technological education in Victoria.

While paying tribute to all who have contributed to the success of the school, special mention must be made of the late Miss Nina Carr, whose remarkable talents, vision and energy were the original source of the school's ethos, and whose influence still echoes in its corridors today.

### MENTONE GIRLS' SCHOOL

Miss Nina Carr	1955 - 1958
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### MENTONE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Miss Nina Carr	1959 - 1965
Miss Annie McLennan	1966 - 1969
Mrs. Ruth Nicholds	1970 - 1972
Miss Joan Addinsall (Acting)	1973 - 1974
Miss Gwen Northey	1975 - 1977
Miss Noela Eury	1978 - 1981
Mr. Peter Richardson (Acting)	1982
Mr. Michael Constable	1983 - 1987

### MENTONE GIRLS' SECONDARY COLLEGE

Mr. Michael Constable	1988
Ms. Lesley Boston	1989 -



## MENTONE GIRLS' SCHOOL 1955 - 1958

*"There is the need for a girls' school in the Mentone area."*

Miss Frances Higgins  
Board of Secondary Inspectors, 1954



**Principal - Miss Nina Carr**

In 1954 there were eleven girls' schools in Victoria, most of them established as the result of work done by Miss Frances Higgins, who felt that the work done by girls in the average high school was undervalued. She wished to encourage girls to stay on at school in order to develop their skills in both academic and practical work, in an era when it was common for girls to leave school after completing Year 9 or Year 10. Far fewer girls than boys progressed to tertiary study at the University of Melbourne (the only Victorian University then) and, although women outnumbered men in the teaching service, it was less usual for a woman to have a degree.

When the Inspectors visited Colac High School in 1954, Miss Nina Carr was a member of staff teaching English and French. As an outstanding teacher, dedicated to the belief that girls' education was equally as important as boys', Nina was advised by Miss Higgins to apply for the Principalship of the new girls' school which was to be established in Mentone the following year. Nina was unenthusiastic at first, being totally committed to



her classroom teaching, and it was only after a great deal of thought that she agreed to apply. Needless to say, her application was successful.

Applications for enrolment in Form 1 came from as far away as Chelsea, Sandringham, Moorabbin, Aspendale, Highett, Black Rock, Beaumaris, Parkdale, Edithvale and Cheltenham. The enrolments were made at Mordialloc High School by the Principal of that school. Nina, still teaching at Colac High School, knew nothing of what was happening but late in 1954 she came up to a meeting at the Department of Education. There were six newly appointed Principals at that meeting, the others all being men. Each of the new Principals was given a cheque for £50.00 and asked if they had any questions. "Hundreds!" responded Nina. When she explained that she knew nothing of accounting or office procedures, she was told, "Miss Carr - you'll learn." And of course she did.

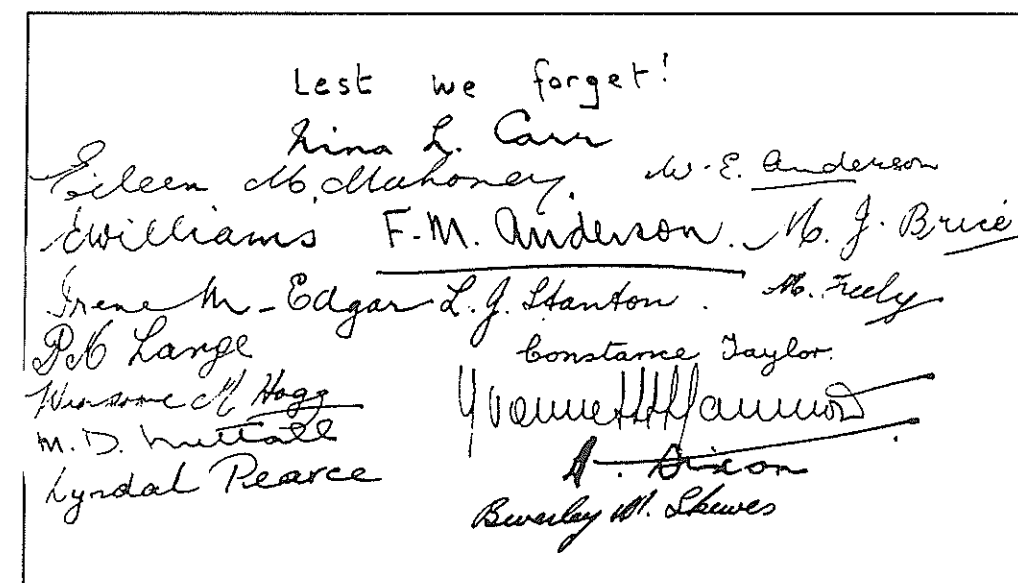
The site chosen for the Mentone Girls' School was Crown Allotment A, Portion 50, situated at the corner of Balcombe and Charman Roads, Mentone. The land, which was used for a market garden, was resumed by the Crown and the residence on the site sold for removal. At the beginning of the school year in 1955 the school building was still under construction and classes had to be held in several local halls: the Church of England Sunday School hall on the Nepean Highway; the Mechanics' Institute, also on the Nepean Highway; the Baptist Church Sunday School hall in Chesterville Road and the Mentone Town Hall. All of these have since been demolished, except for the Baptist Church hall, and have been replaced by more modern buildings.

In the 1954 Christmas holidays Miss Carr made lists of girls' names and addresses in order to allocate the students to halls nearest their homes. She also took care, as far as possible, to keep the girls with students from their own primary schools. There were approximately sixty girls in Year 8 at this stage, all of whom were to be accommodated in the Mentone Town Hall. The time-table was arranged to limit teachers' travel time between halls, teachers spending a whole morning in one hall where possible. The Mentone Town Hall was the "permanent" staff quarters but there was considerable travelling between Cheltenham and Mentone for teachers of craft and music.

When the hire of the halls was arranged the halls' custodians expressed alarm at the possible damage to the halls and equipment. There was also the question of leaving the halls free for night activities. Miss Carr solved this problem by arranging for the girls to do most of their work on drawing boards, which could be stacked in corners at the end of the day. There was nowhere to store possessions, so the girls did their work in several exercise books, which they took home with them each day. There were never any complaints about the conduct of the students or the state of the halls, in fact those concerned became as enthusiastic about the new school as the students and staff themselves.

Before the beginning of the school year there was one meeting only of parents, at Mordialloc High School, which was not particularly well attended. The big questions were about courses, available subjects, uniforms, catering for lunches and where the students would be housed.

On the first school day of 1955, staff, girls and many mothers all gathered in the Mentone Town Hall. It was an exciting morning, full of questions and suggestions. Most of the students were in uniform, thanks to the hard work of Mr. and Mrs. William Duncan, from whose store in Mentone the girls had been able to purchase their summer uniform of dress, blazer, pullover and hat. This assembly took all morning, after which the girls were dismissed. The teachers then had a cup of tea and discussed their future tasks. Miss Carr described these fifteen teachers, her first staff, as "a fine group of teachers who worked enthusiastically and well under very trying conditions".



THE ORIGINAL STAFF - 1955

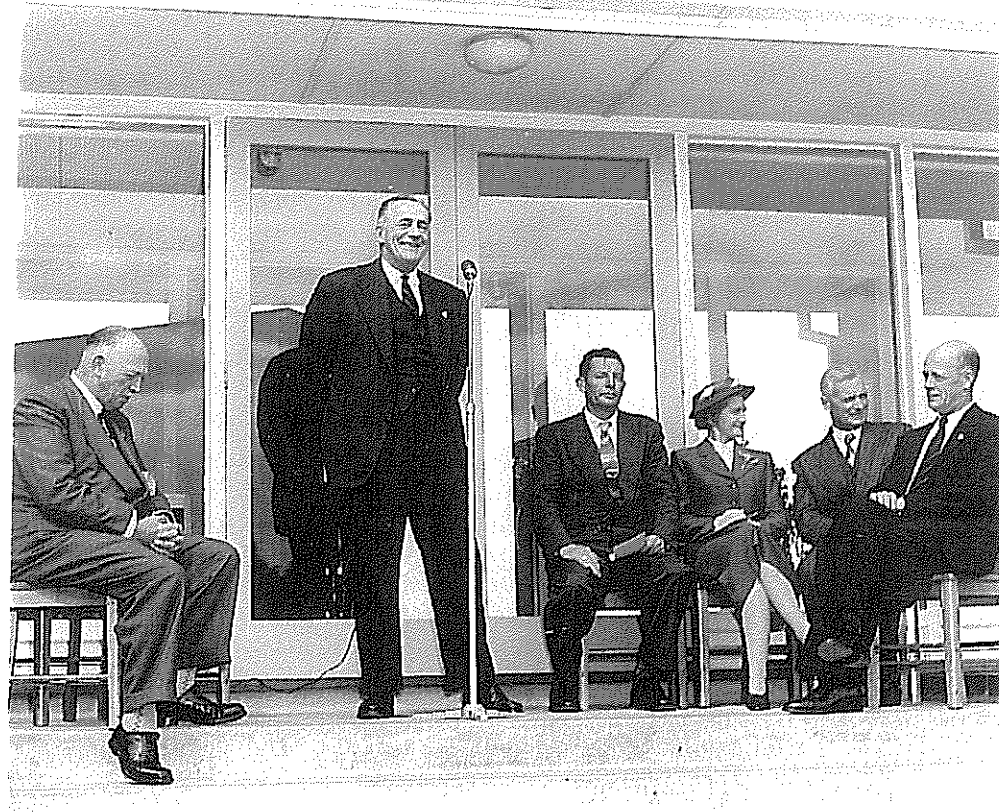
The Principal's office was a small room off the Church of England Sunday School hall. Her secretary was Miss Beverley Skewes, a young girl who had just finished her fourth year at Mordialloc High School, and who, according to Miss Carr, had "plenty of energy and nous". With advice from women Principals at other girls' schools the two of them worked out what the various Education Department forms were for, how to keep accounts, the best way of collecting fees from the various halls and the safest way of getting the money to the bank, etc. It was a very busy time. There was no telephone contact with the Department, which made it difficult to keep in touch. A public telephone box on the Nepean Highway (very hot and noisy) was used a great deal.

The girls adapted very well to the crowded, uncomfortable conditions and lack of playing space. They were encouraged to bring board-games from home to use at recess and lunchtime. Students in one hall came to know each other well but they knew nothing of girls in other halls. Despite these difficulties, the school's first swimming sports were held in March at the Dandenong public swimming pool. The heats for the various events, that year and for several years following, were held at Mentone beach, with the Physical Education teacher on Mentone pier calling instructions through a loud-hailer.



Perhaps the most distressing problem in those first days was the Department's failure to supply toilet paper, despite frequent anguished appeals. Finally, all requests were answered at once and six months' supply arrived. This created a new problem - where to store it? A kind friend of Miss Carr's came to the rescue and offered his garage for the housing of all those hundreds of rolls. A further example of bureaucratic insensitivity was the fact that the first piece of equipment that was supplied by the Department was a set of gardening tools. There was no school building, let alone a school garden.

Nevertheless, good will and good humour enabled students and staff to battle on until at last the school building could be occupied on 14th June, 1955. The school was officially opened by the Education Minister, the Honourable J.S. Bloomfield, on 11th October the same year.



**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SCHOOL BY THE HON. J.S. BLOOMFIELD  
11TH OCTOBER, 1955**



**STUDENT GYMNASTIC DISPLAY AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING**

### **The Cabbage Patch Kids**

The new school building consisted of one and a half legs of an H-shaped structure rising from a sea of builders' rubble, clay mud and some acres of what had been a market garden. There was no heating or electricity and the Domestic Arts wing was not available for occupation until late September. The corridors were a cleaner's nightmare, but the maintenance officer, Mr. Meredith, did excellent work in seeing to the cleanliness of the school, as he continued to do, with one break of several years, until his retirement in 1985.

The upside of this situation was that smaller classes could be held in normal classrooms and in normal conditions. The girls could now buy appropriate text books and store them in their new lockers. Although the grounds remained in an unsatisfactory state for a long time, there was a great interest in sport, students keenly contesting their interhouse sports and taking part in interschool sports in October.

Students were divided alphabetically into four houses: Jackson House, named for Marjorie Jackson, Australia's first woman Olympic Gold medallist; Kenny House, named for Sister Kenny, who pioneered treatment for poliomyelitis; Melba House, named for the great



singer, Dame Nellie Melba, and Mackellar House, named for the poet, Dorothea Mackellar, who wrote, "I love a sunburnt country". House captains and form captains were elected and also six prefects, three from each of the newly formed Form 2 classes. The first-year students were re-organized from their various halls into six forms, 1A to 1F.



#### 1955 HOUSE CAPTAINS

J. McDonald	E. Lowe	J. Robin	G. Botterill
JACKSON	MELBA	KENNY	MACKELLAR

At that time marching was a competitive school sport and, once the four Houses had been formed, Miss Carr oversaw the training and practice of the House marching teams. This culminated in the inter-house marching competition which provided the grand finale to every annual Sports Day. The school also competed successfully in this event with other girls' schools.

There was no sound system, so notices and school news had to be posted on a blackboard in the corridor near the general office. There was now an opportunity for free communication among the girls though, and as they came to know each other properly, clubs were formed for Drama, Red Cross, I.S.C.F. and a school choir. The first school magazine reflects the students' excitement at moving into their own premises and their pride in their new school. A typical example is the following verse written by an anonymous poet in Form 1E.

*When he first saw Australia, Captain Cook  
Gave the country an angry look.  
"This is dreadful," he cried, "there's not even a school.  
If my daughter stays here, she'll grow into a fool."  
This year (it's nineteen fifty-five)  
He would have learned a golden rule  
All nice girls go to Mentone Girls' School.*



FORM 8 - 1955



The production of a school magazine after such a disturbed year was an outstanding achievement, for which Miss Carr gave credit to Mrs. Yvonne Hammond. The school crest, which featured on the front cover and was emblazoned on the girls' blazer pockets, had been suggested by another staff member, the late Mrs. F. Anderson. She suggested "borrowing" the coat of arms of the city of Menton in France. This was a happy choice, not only because of the shared name, but also because of how well the crest lent itself to the school motto, Virtute et Labore. "By courage and work" was Miss Carr's personal motto, which she often recommended to her students. St. Michael slaying the dragon, she pointed out, could be taken to represent Education, armed with the sword of Knowledge and the scales of Reason, slaying the dragon of Ignorance.

No school can function successfully without the wholehearted support of the parents, and Miss Carr was full of praise for the Ladies' Auxiliary and the members of the Advisory Council. A successful fete raised a good sum to provide amenities for the students and the building of a school tuck shop was high on the list of priorities.

Another priority was the establishment of a garden in front of the school and parents donated native shrubs and plants for this. Miss Carr, who was always a very keen gardener, spent a great deal of time after school and on weekends working in the school garden. She was able to do this because in 1956 she had decided to live in the flat, which at that time was a feature of every girls' school and was intended to provide housekeeping practice for students following the Girls' School Course. These students not only kept the flat clean but also did Nina's laundry, shopping and even some of her cooking. One daring Inspector in the '50s suggested that she was not really supposed to live in the flat but was roundly told that was a "silly" idea. Living on the school premises meant that Miss Carr was completely committed to and identified with the school. The advantage to the students was that they were gaining genuine practice in the tasks they were being trained to perform. Of course she paid rent and power bills.

Occupying the flat meant that Miss Carr was to a great extent isolated from other people and on at least two occasions this entailed personal danger. One evening in the '50s, a group of youths gathered outside the flat and tried to intimidate her by their noisy behaviour. Never one to submit to bullying, Nina went out and confronted them, showing more "virtute" than she really felt. She acknowledged later that perhaps she should not have done this, but her confidence was vindicated when the boys left without making more trouble. She was in greater peril one night in the early '60s when an electrical fault caused a fire which completely demolished the domestic science wing of the building. Woken by the sound of crackling and the smell of smoke, Miss Carr was able to save herself, though it was some time before she could raise the alarm and summon help. Students and staff arriving at school the next morning were aghast to find a large part of the building a charred ruin. When Miss Carr left the school the flat was not occupied again until the '70s, when it was given to Year 12 students to use as a common room. The Girls' School Course was discontinued after 1958.



DOMESTIC SCIENCE - 1956

*"There is an excellent tone in the school."*  
Report of Board of Inspectors, 1956

In 1955 all students had followed a general course of study but in the following year girls had the choice of three courses: the Girls' School Course, the Commercial Course or the High School Course, which led on to Matriculation and tertiary education. The Mordialloc Council had made three scholarships available to girls living in the City of Mordialloc and four scholarships were given by the Ladies' Auxiliary, one to each of the first forms in 1956. That year the Advisory Council also allocated three scholarships worth £10.00 each to girls in the 3rd year who were following the High School Course, to encourage them to further their education.

Although it was common for girls to leave school early in those days, the school's enrolment increased steadily each year. Classes were large by today's standards but the girls were easy to manage and it was not unfashionable then for students to admit that they were proud of their school. By the late '50s, Mentone Girls' School had established its reputation as an excellent school and in 1958 the enrolment had reached over six hundred. Even then, Miss Carr continued to refer to the school as a "family", and the students and their parents continued to see the school in this affectionate light.

This feeling can be illustrated by the following excerpt from the 1956 School Magazine.

Daughter: *"Mother, there is a photograph in the paper of a woman who has twenty children."*

Mother: *"Oh, that's nothing. Miss Carr has four hundred and fifty children."*

("Little crawlers!" one cynical teacher is reported to have muttered - but with a smile.)

#### FORM CAPTAINS

Front Row:

L. O'Brien, B. Anderson, C. Currer, G. White

Back Row:

J. Munro, P. Weeks, B. Brewer, G. Laren



#### PREFECTS

(left to right)

M. Robinson, J. Robin,

P. Ellis, G. Botterill.

Inset - J. Munro

Throughout the '50s continual improvements were being made to the "family home" and its grounds. Accommodation was adequate for the increasing numbers of students, playing courts were completed and the grounds were looking very attractive. Arrangements were made to have the grounds fenced and in the meantime native trees

were planted round the perimeter. Mordialloc Council undertook the grading and levelling of the grounds and the Advisory Council purchased a motor mower which was used to good effect by several fathers who gave up part of their weekends for this purpose. The Board of Inspectors and other visitors praised the bright, fresh appearance of the interior of the building with its attractive displays of students' work and the floral arrangements from the school's flower gardens. The empty shelves of the library had been filled and the school had the services of a full-time trained librarian, the late Mrs. Sheila Ridland, who taught the girls not only how to use the library but also to value and care for the books.

The school's good reputation, so early established, continued to grow as Mentone Girls' School was increasingly perceived as providing a sound education in a very caring environment. The students were encouraged to think of others and, if the money raised for Social Service fell below the previous year's effort, Miss Carr was sure to mention the fact rather sharply and deplore the fact that some girls had to be persuaded to be generous.

In the third Annual Report of Mentone Girls' School, Miss Carr expressed the ethos of the school which she had founded:

*"If (the students) have found it difficult to be honest, to be courteous, to admire what is beautiful, to be understanding and sympathetic here in a school the main purpose of which is to set these ideals before them, then they will find it even more difficult to achieve these standards of behaviour elsewhere. We hope that the time they have spent at this school will help to give them courage to set for themselves and to pursue the highest possible standards and that they will become useful and respected members of the society of which they will form a part."*



MARCHING INTO THE FUTURE - 1958



## MENTONE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL 1959 - 1987

*"The Principal continues to provide the leadership needed  
to maintain the excellent standards already established."*  
Report of Board of Inspectors, 1959

### Principal - Miss Nina Carr 1959 - 1965

On 4th August, 1958, a Ministerial Order established that the school was to be designated as "Mentone Girls' High School".

What was different about the school in 1959 apart from its name? There were no immediate changes to the school philosophy or curriculum but there was a general feeling that the school had been "promoted", and a looking forward to the time when girls who wanted to continue their studies would not be forced to transfer to other schools. For the first time the school had a fifth form, but it was not until 1962 that there would be sufficient numbers to hold the first Matriculation classes.

In 1959 there were sixty-seven girls in Form 5, reflecting the tendency of students to remain at the school after the legal leaving age of fourteen. As the enrolment at the first year level was steadily increasing, the need for further accommodation in the near future could be seen. The existing buildings were still in good repair and well maintained, a wide range of subjects was being offered and the library's resources and facilities were expanding. Junior and senior hockey teams had been formed (sometimes coached by Miss Carr) and there were also teams for tennis, basketball and softball. The school's first debating teams had been formed and were competing successfully with other schools.

DEBATING TEAM - 1960  
Front Row: A. Page, V. Young,  
R. Castles, J. Ranoschy  
Back Row: A. Atkins, E. Russell,  
M. Diggins.



In this year, the Advisory Council made available three new scholarships of £10.00 each to senior girls, while the tireless Ladies' Auxiliary raised enough money to provide additional bicycle racks, a third tennis court, a sprinkler system and a film projector. In those days, this last acquisition was the last word in educational technology and was celebrated by holding a film night in the school library. The film viewed was 'Great Expectations' in black and white. For some years after this, teachers in all faculties were encouraged to upgrade their qualifications by learning to work the film projector. The Ladies' Auxiliary also provided scholarships for girls in the first and second forms during 1959.

Twelve prefects were elected from the new High Schools' first Leaving Certificate class and one of their most onerous duties was to mount guard at the school gates at the end of the day to check that girls were wearing their hats or winter berets. It was Miss Carr's custom to hold regular meetings in her office with the prefects. These meetings were highly confidential and there was some speculation among the rest of the school as to what (or who) might be the latest topic under discussion.

Under the able leadership of the music teacher, Miss Helen Reed, the school choir had established an excellent reputation and competed successfully in music festivals. It was Miss Reed who composed the music for the school song, which was written by a Form 8 student, Marjorie Hoysted, and which was sung with gusto at school assemblies and speech nights until it fell into disfavour in the '80s and was discontinued. At meetings of the Past Students' Association today, some "old" girls still remember fondly how they enjoyed belting out the refrain: "Virtute et Labore".

In response to a need felt by parents on the Advisory Council, a Parents' Association was formed in 1960. Members of the Association undertook various tasks of benefit to the school: film evenings and talks to the students were organized; a dancing class was offered to the students; parents acted as ushers on such occasions as Open Night and a working pool of fathers laid down concrete paths and worked on the grounds.



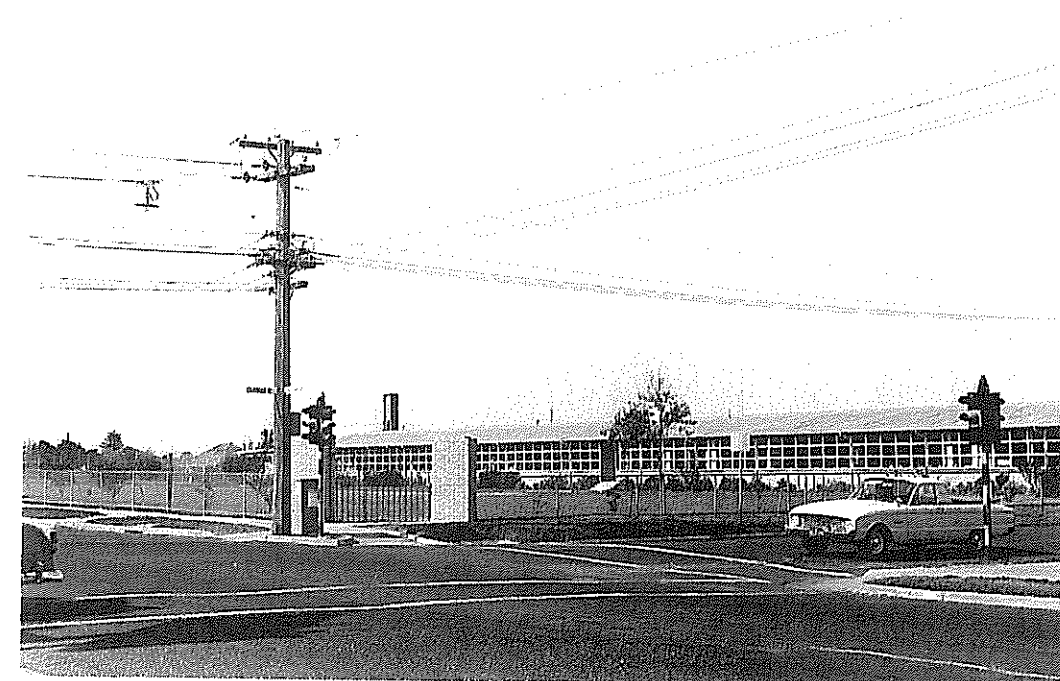
**Miss Carr, Mrs. Marjorie Elmore, leader of the Red Cross Club, and club members planting a tree to commemorate the Red Cross Centenary - 1959**  
(The tree, an oak, was chopped down in the mid-eighties to make room for portable classrooms.)

### **A Memorable Year - 1962**

For the first time the school had a sixth form, consisting of thirty-one students with the opportunity of studying any of twelve subjects offered. All agreed that the school had gained greatly from having these seniors as part of the school population. They were a particularly able and interested group of students, who were completely committed not only to their own studies but also to contributing to the activities of the school. Their Matriculation results were very pleasing, thirteen girls being awarded Commonwealth Scholarships.

This was also the year when a co-operative society was launched for the building of the much needed school assembly hall. The estimated cost was £23,000, half of which would be paid by the Government, the other half being the school's responsibility. Miss Carr acknowledged "the splendid response" of parents and staff who lent their names as guarantors for the proposed bank loan. Many parents and friends of the school made donations to the hall fund.

A third matter for congratulations this year was the success of the girls in the field of sport. Not only did the sports teams win the junior and senior and aggregate awards at the combined girls' athletics sports, but for the first time the athletic team competed in the central division of the Metropolitan High School Sports and snatched victory by half a point from their nearest rival, Brighton High School.



**VIEW OF THE SCHOOL IN 1963 BEFORE THE HALL WAS BUILT**





**THE NINA CARR HALL**

1964 was another memorable year for the fact that the school's 10th annual Speech Night was presented in the school's own hall. After several years of planning, designing and organizing payment, the hall had been completed at last. When the hall was officially opened in March, 1965, the compliment of naming the hall after Miss Carr was felt by all to be a fitting tribute to an outstanding Principal. It was unusual for a hall to be named after a presiding Principal but no other name would have been so appropriate as that of the woman who had founded the school and directed it from its first struggling days to be regarded as one of the best girls' high schools in Victoria.

Even in 1964, the hall was not large enough to seat all the pupils and their parents but such a hall would have been quite beyond the school's means, even with the Government's eventual subsidy of £3.00 for £1.00. Miss Carr was an advocate of small schools and small classes but by now the school enrolment had reached eight hundred and, judging by the demand for places, promised to grow beyond that. Apart from accommodation difficulties, this meant that some classes contained over forty-five students.

To accommodate senior classes, the verandah rooms had been constructed and now several portable classrooms were supplied by the Education Department. These portables were hot in summer and cold in winter in those days but nothing diminished the enthusiasm of the school's early "Matrics".

A highlight of 1964 was the commencement of the building of a new science block as the result of a Commonwealth Grant. There was also the excitement of being represented at the Tokyo Olympic Games by two of the school's Physical Education teachers, Miss Val Roberts in gymnastics and Miss Judith Amore in athletics.

### **1965 - The End of an Era.**

1965 was Miss Carr's final year as Principal of Mentone Girls' High School. In 1966 she was to take up a new position as Principal of MacRobertson Girls' High School, one of the most esteemed positions attainable for a woman teacher in Victoria.

The staff and student body of Mentone Girls' High School were devastated to learn of their impending loss, and not a little incredulous at first that, even for such a glittering prize, Nina could thus desert her very own "baby". But when the fact was properly assimilated, everyone felt great pride in her achievement and wholeheartedly rejoiced that she had reached the top of the tree in her career. Today her portrait, presented to her by the staff in 1964, hangs outside the present Principal's office, so that she still seems to be keeping an eye on what is happening in the school.



**MISS CARR AND THE PREFECTS - 1965**

*"Miss Carr commenced the pattern but Miss McLennan has continued to enrich and strengthen it with her guidance."*

Editorial  
School Magazine, 1966



**Principal - Miss Annie McLennan 1966-1969**

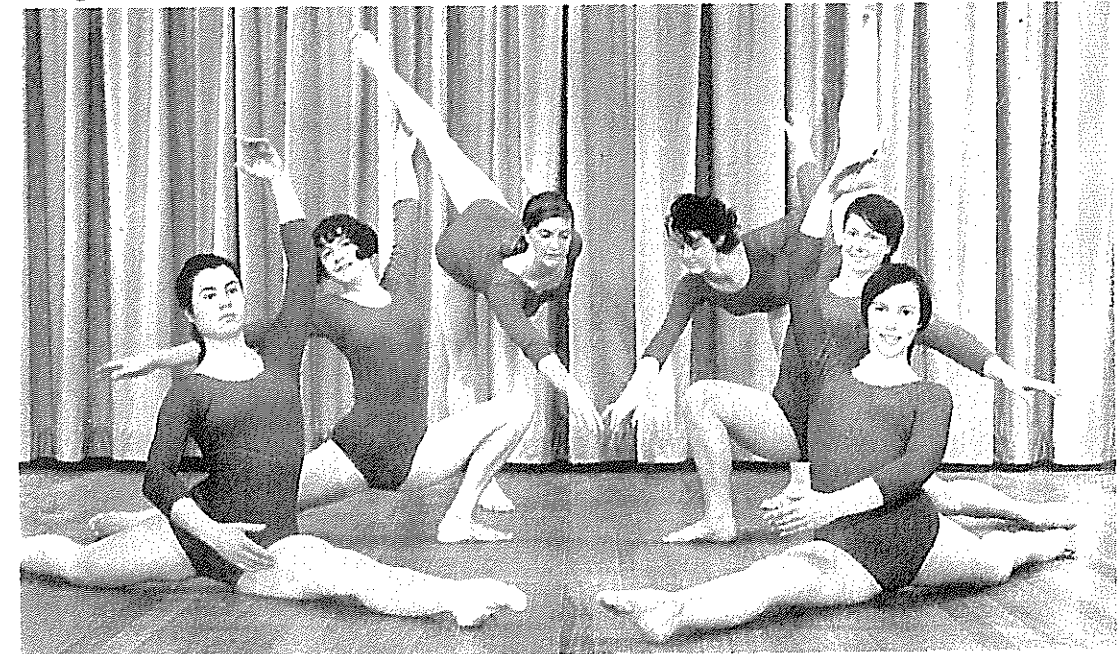
When Miss Annie McLennan became Principal of Mentone Girls' High School in 1966, she inherited over eight hundred students, forty-eight teaching staff, two office staff and a fine tradition, which she was eager to maintain.

That year eighteen prefects were elected and, among other duties, began the never-ending battle to enforce the correct wearing of the school uniform: blazers done up; hats on heads; socks turned down; hair tied back and ties worn inside winter tunics. In those days the Matriculation class wore school uniform and were expected to set a standard of neatness for the rest of the school.

A chess club and a folk-singing club were added to the school activities, and the active Drama Club was now able to present its productions in the Nina Carr Hall. The school hall was also the venue for that year's debutante ball, a third form social, the Form 1 fancy dress party organized by the Prefects and, finally, the Prefects' dance. Owing to the large enrolment, the custom of holding separate functions for Senior Speech Night and Junior Speech Afternoon had already been established and was continued for many years.

A highlight of 1966 was the "official" opening of the new science block. Some boys were "borrowed" from Mordialloc High School to carry the science equipment to the new rooms, after which they were invited by the Form 6 science students to help in blowing up balloons and hanging streamers before a celebratory luncheon of weenies, cakes and coffee, utilising the one gas tap that worked and the leaky sinks. (These faults were soon rectified.)

The athletics and swimming teams continued to enjoy their usual success in inter-school competition and under the leadership of Miss Val Roberts, the Olympic gymnast, the school's gymnastic team distinguished itself by producing several Victorian champions. Miss Roberts' team repeated their success every year she was at the school and those who witnessed their gymnastic displays on Senior Speech Nights will still remember their grace and skill.



**THE GYMNASTIC TEAM - 1967**

In 1966 the school's first (recorded) Ex-Students' Association was formed and flourished for some years before fading from the school's ken.

In the middle sixties there was still a clinging to tradition and the values of the past, so that a student's article on "School Spirit" in the 1966 School Magazine probably expressed the feelings of the majority of students then.

*"For a student to obtain true school spirit, she must be prepared to abide by the school rules, think of others as well as herself and be prepared to make sacrifices for her school, such as attending school functions outside school hours."*

Dianne Blake, Form 6.

This attitude was to be threatened to some extent by the changing times. In the late sixties, society's perception of authority was altering and traditional ideas were being challenged. Some students were influenced by anti-Vietnam war demonstrations and university student demonstrations to create their own forms of student protest. 'The Little Red Schoolbook' was circulated, as was an "underground" news sheet called 'Fallout', which negatively criticized the education system.



Students' articles in the 1968 school magazine reveal a wide range of responses to these influences.

*"Student protests are chiefly the result of a strong need to assert independence and individuality."*

Julie Firth, Form 6.

*"The thoughts (this news sheet) provoked were destructive and rebellious and could only produce students like those who riot and demonstrate."*

Margaret Young, Form 4B.

*"This (news sheet) is no radical publication aimed at undermining the authorities; it is a sincere attempt to involve students more actively in the affairs of the school, affairs which affect them."*

Maryanne Mester, Form 6.

In an effort to involve students in the organization of the school, Miss McLennan approved the formation of the school's first Students' Representative Council. There was constructive participation by the students and staff, and Miss McLennan gave serious consideration to the girls' suggestions and ideas, even though not all of these were feasible.



THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL - 1968

At this time, most senior students were very much aware of the complexities of the world they were soon to enter and engaged in debate about the role of women in society, Australia's relations with Asia, the aims of education and, a matter closer to themselves, the validity of the Prefect system.

One obvious if minor result of the strong trend towards "liberation" was a change in the rules affecting school uniform. While still expected to wear uniform, the Form 6 students were now allowed to substitute a navy skirt for the tunic worn by the younger girls. Whereas students in earlier times had been sometimes forced to kneel so that the distance between the hems of their sports dresses and the floor could be measured, now the hems of their regulation skirts and tunics were creeping higher and higher, in line with the growing fashion of mini-skirts.

The Casual Dress Day was also introduced, which not only raised money for charity but, according to Jenny Atwood, Head Prefect in 1969, "was quite startling for several older members of the staff and provided competition for other younger teachers".

Despite all this turbulence, and a shortage of teachers which was part of a state-wide shortage, the school maintained its excellent academic record during the four years that Miss McLennan was Principal. She had enjoyed being part of Mentone Girls' High School and she retains very good memories of the support and friendship she received from staff, students and parents.

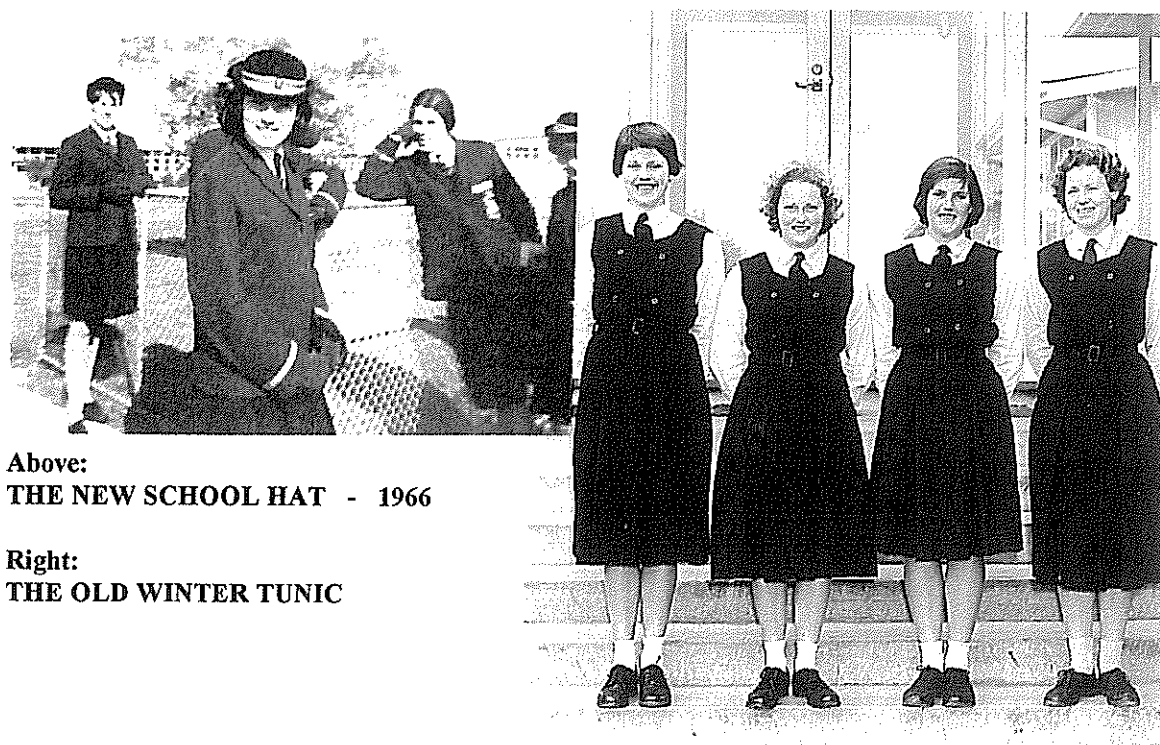


**THE PREFECTS WEARING THE NEW FORM 6 UNIFORM - 1968**

Back row: G. Singleton, H. Lee-Archer, M. Mester, J. Martin, J. Maddocks, J. Firth, R. Purves.

Middle row: M. Hoysted, J. Brook, L. Langton, D. Issacson (Deputy Head Prefect), S. Burdett (Head Prefect), J. Menkhorst, J. Groom, S. Wicks.

Front row: C. Allday, J. Bosman, S. Taylor, J. Elmer, R. Moore.



**Above:  
THE NEW SCHOOL HAT - 1966**

**Right:  
THE OLD WINTER TUNIC**

**THE SPORTS DRESS - 1955 - 1970 - 1995**







*"The quality of your school groups depends on your involvement in them as members. And the school itself can only be as effective as the groups that comprise it."*

Mrs. Ruth Nicholds  
School Magazine, 1970

## Principal - Mrs Ruth Nicholds 1970 - 1972

The desire to change the world that was a characteristic of Mentone Girls' High School students in the late '60s seems to have dissipated somewhat by 1970. Student apathy and lack of involvement in student affairs were blamed for the demise of several clubs including the Drama Club, for the lack of 6th form co-operation in negotiating a 6th form common room and for the lack of interest in supporting the Students' Representative Council.

Catchphrases such as "generation gap" and "peer group" were much in vogue, the pros and cons of demonstrations were still being argued and hemlines were still climbing. It was during this period that staff members who did not want to show too much leg took to wearing trouser suits and, eventually, jeans, altering the dress code for teachers permanently. The dangers of drug-taking were very much on the minds of parents and staff at this time and attempts were made to educate the students on these dangers.

Despite accusations of student apathy, the girls always seemed to rise to the occasion when it mattered. Fostered by Mrs. Nicholds, concern for others less fortunate was still a dominant trait in the school community and, as 1970 proved to be a year of disasters in the world, over £1,300.00 was raised to aid victims of earthquakes and cyclones overseas, Melbourne's Westgate Bridge tragedy at home and underprivileged children in Victoria.

In 1970 the Higher School Certificate replaced the Matriculation course and the school's first careers teacher, Mrs. Findlay, was appointed. An extremely successful Careers Week was organized with a comprehensive agenda including study skills, advice on interviews, tertiary education for women and how to enrol for university courses. A talk by the Vice-Principal of Frankston Teachers' College on primary teaching was very popular, as at that time it was usual for a third of our Matriculation year to enrol in some branch of teaching.

The school's first HSC results were very good, with forty-one girls achieving the certificate and thirty-one gaining honours in one or more subjects.

This was the final year of Mrs. Sheila Ridland's service as school librarian. She had been the school's first librarian in 1956, when she laid the foundations of the school's library. In the fifteen years since then, she had been of invaluable assistance to students and staff and had trained generations of excellent student library assistants.

1970 also saw the end of the prefect system. In 1971 the new HSC class decided to abolish the system on the grounds that it was elitist. From now on, the whole 6th form was to assume the duties (and privileges) of the prefects in the organization of the school. The 6th form captain, rather than the Head Prefect would represent the school on the necessary occasions. When a particular activity was to be organized, a committee of volunteers would be chosen. The new system worked well and has continued to the present time. From now on, uniform and locker inspections would be supervised by the staff.

In 1971 Mrs. Nicholds oversaw the repainting and refurbishment of the main buildings. Staffroom areas were expanded and the new offices were carpeted. The Vice Principal, Miss Gwen Bowles, chose a purple carpet and had a matching purple marble egg on her desk, which are still vividly remembered by some past students of that time.



MISS BOWLES' SENIOR CHOIR - 1970



#### HOUSE CAPTAINS - 1970

Lynn Martin, Penny Bethune, Jan Ratcliff, Marilyn Hogben, Wendy Smythe, Christine Tammesilo, Judy Edwards and Robyn Carnegie.

A great Drama revival occurred in 1971 with the arrival in the school of a new Drama teacher, Mrs. Chris Gogerly, under whose talented leadership the senior girls produced interesting plays, often written by themselves. In 1974 their play 'Once Upon a Tower' won the prize for the best set and staging in the 'Sun' Schools Drama Festival. Two of the students involved in these plays, Helene Burden and Elizabeth Rule, went on to make their careers in the acting profession.

The school magazines during this period reflect the ways in which students were wanting to express their tastes and ideas. The magazine covers are now artistic rather than formal; there are more photographs of student art and craft, and the articles and poems express how differently these students saw their world from the way their predecessors had seen it. Of course, it was a different world. Equal Opportunity for women was yet to come, but the girls were well aware of the Women's Liberation Movement. Consider this conclusion to a highly satirical article on marriage:

*This is my idea of a civilized marriage - a marriage which is successful because I acknowledge my husband's overlordship and sacrifice myself for the happiness of my loving family . . . .  
Who says women are downtrodden and exploited!"*

Leela Devi Nair, Form 6.

Where once a girl might write on the benefits of "school spirit", we now find an insistence on individuality:

*Please come and visit my mind,  
And tell me what you see.  
Help me sort my brain out,  
But don't try to organize me.*

A Thompson, 3A.

Concern for their environment was an important issue for students in the early '70s and in 1971 an Anti-pollution Committee was formed, which later became the Environmental Protection Committee. There were enthusiastic Clean-a-thons, not only of the school but also of Balcombe and Beach Roads on Saturday afternoons.

Like the late '60s, the early '70s were a time of changes in the wider community, which were reflected by changes in the school community. Mrs. Nicholds had guided the school safely through these vicissitudes and, when she left the school in 1972, the students expressed their gratitude for her understanding and support.





*"We have been working hard but it's been fun."*  
Jill Vale 2A  
School Magazine, 1973

### **Acting Principal-Miss Joan Addinsall 1973-1974**

Miss Joan Addinsall was Acting Principal for the last two terms of 1973 and for the whole of 1974. She was young and enthusiastic, and her five terms of leadership were a period of energetic student activity.

The Environmental Committee was in full swing, organizing successful Earth Weeks, cultivating their own vegetable garden in front of the verandah rooms, and organizing can and glass collections for recycling. The Junior and Senior Drama Clubs continued to produce plays that delighted their audiences, the four School Houses competed in lively fashion on the sporting field and in the pool, and also in the Annual Choral Festivals. The 6th formers made yet another attempt to found an Ex-Students' Association - to be known as the Mentone Old Leaving Ladies' Society. This association seems to have been of short duration, perhaps because not many past students wanted to be MOLLs!

In 1973 the school's first HSC Study Camp was organized by Mrs. Bea Bowes and Miss Christine Bryan. Sixty-six students from Mentone Girls' High School and twelve students from Malvern Girls' High School attended a school camp in Monbulk, where they discussed such topics as their role in the school and what committees they wanted to establish. One of their priorities was a 6th form common room and adequate study accommodation.

In 1974 Miss Addinsall presented the school's 20th Annual Report, which confirmed that school organization had been running smoothly and some improvements had been made.

The library now had the services of two full-time librarians and a library aide, though the school enrolment at this time was not large enough to entitle it to an audio-visual technician. Long-awaited shelving had been installed, and carpet jointly funded by the Education Department and the Advisory Council had been laid in the fiction section. By the end of the year the installation of eight audio-visual carrels was expected.

Although drainage problems in wet weather were an ongoing problem, with playing fields being water-logged for most of 1974, the hall car-park and drive had been asphalted and some areas of the garden had been re-planted. Plans for expanding the school building had been frustrated by the mid-year financial embarrassment of the Government but, thanks to the Voluntary Contributions Appeal to parents, the school's general equipment had been increased in many areas.

The Advisory Council, after securing the promise of help from mothers of students, had decided to put the School Canteen in the hands of a Committee of Management and a paid manager, Mrs. Nash. As well as improving the bill of fare, it was hoped that this would enable an annual profit to be made to be used for the school.

A fitting culmination to a period of active student involvement was the announcement that the girls had that year raised the sum of \$2,342 for Social Service.

In 1975 Miss Addinsall was working at Glenbervie as the first Secondary Field Officer for In-service Education but in 1976 she returned to Mentone as Deputy Principal. In 1977 she became Principal of Moorabbin High School. As Miss Northey said, "Miss Addinsall's devotion to the school, her meticulous attention to detail and her grasp of educational matters made her very difficult to replace."

*"Thank you, Miss Northey!"*  
Editorial  
School Magazine, 1977



## Principal - Miss Gwen Northey 1975 - 1977

In her three years as Principal the most significant area that Miss Northey supported and influenced was the change in the Form 5 curriculum from a traditional format to a major/minor studies approach. She also oversaw a more active pastoral care programme and the establishment of a separate careers department within the school.

1975 began with an enrolment of seven hundred and fifty pupils, the Form 1 intake having been restricted to four forms to allow for a more flexible use of rooms and smaller classes, a policy which was followed for the next few years. There were sixty-two teaching staff, three librarians and three office staff.

This year introduced the first of the Annual Revues which were to become a popular feature of the school's drama programme. Whereas formerly drama productions had been the province of fairly small groups of drama students, in 1975 more than two hundred and fifty girls, inspired mainly by Mr. Jim Williams, presented an entertainment consisting of a wide variety of acts.

By now the students were used to the presence of male teachers (though in earlier years there had never been more than one at a time) and in 1975 there were eight men on the teaching staff. For part of this year Mr. J. Williams was the second male teacher to act as Deputy Principal, the first having been Mr. R. Simpfendorfer in 1974.

A highlight of 1975, for the 6th formers at least, was the achievement of finally gaining "a place of their own", when the school flat and all its facilities was handed over to them to use as a common room.

The playing fields continued to be flooded in wet weather, making athletic training at school impossible at times, but otherwise the grounds were kept in excellent condition. In

1975 thirty new trees were planted by the form captains, and further improvements during Miss Northey's time resulted in the school winning the Mordialloc Council's prize for the best school garden in 1977.

In the library/resource centre the fiction area was turned into a casual reading area, made more pleasant and comfortable by the addition of rugs, cushions and yellow chairs. This led to increased use of the library by students and staff. Over two thousand books were added to the library this year and the new audio-visual carrels were in constant use.

The Advisory Council's decision to take over the organization of the canteen had had a good outcome. Over one hundred mothers, assisted by Form 4 students, had generously donated their time to working in the canteen, which had been extended, thanks to the work of a small group of fathers in the Parents' Association. By the end of 1976 a profit of \$2,359 had been made, which went towards paying the groundsman's salary.

In 1976 there was still a teacher shortage but the school was fully staffed with the exception of a drama teacher. This did not prevent the production of the school's Annual Revue, in which more than three hundred girls were actively involved and which this year made a profit of more than \$740. Several members of the teaching staff took part in the on-stage fun, Mr. John Fox being acknowledged as "King of the Comics" for his often subversive contributions. ("I'm joking, Miss Northey!")

As well as raising \$2,611 for Social Service this year many girls participated in community service programmes, such as assisting with the Mordialloc Council's Meals on Wheels, even during the holidays.

As part of the pastoral care programme for 1st formers, it was decided to take them on a camp early in the year so that they could get to know each other and their teachers. This was implemented in 1977 and proved highly successful. In 1976, the 6th formers were organized by the Year 12 co-ordinator, Mrs. B. Bowes, to undertake the coaching of junior girls in English and Mathematics, which has been a regular practice since then, as has the Year 7 annual camp.

1976 was also the year in which the Student Representative Council, which had lapsed in recent years, was reintroduced, and it promised to be a successful feature of the school's programme from now on. Numbers participating in sport also increased, thanks to the organization of Inter-school Field Days. Miss Northey and Mr. Williams were respectively the President and the Secretary of the Bayside Group of the Victorian High Schools' Association, Mentone being the host school in 1976.

An extension to the library was planned to be built in 1977 but lack of Government assistance frustrated this plan. Instead, the library was rearranged to add extra reading and study space. An enlarged careers section was made a feature of the casual reading area, and parents were encouraged to visit the library to use its resources and services.

In December 1976 a grant of \$20,000 was provided for teachers' unions to examine ways of ending sexism in education. Although the investigations were to start in co-educational schools, some senior students at Mentone were already convinced of the need for girls to



expand their career horizons. A survey conducted by Karen Dacy 5B in 1977 elicited some interesting information. Of ninety-eight girls interviewed, mainly in Year 10, sixty-eight intended permanent retirement from the workforce for child rearing before the age of forty. The choice of professions covered the traditional range of jobs for girls and included the following statistics:

Teaching	- 23	Nursing	- 8	Secretary	- 4
Social Work	- 2	Journalism	- 1	Photography	- 1
Law	- 2	Engineering	- 1	Architecture	- 1

Perhaps it was a sign of times to come that ninety-three girls intended to marry but ninety-four wished to have children. Karen sent the results of this survey to Germaine Greer, who replied in a letter expressing dismay that so many girls lacked adventurousness, exemplified by the fact that the ones interested in medicine were electing to be nurses rather than doctors.

Nevertheless, the school's academic record continued to be excellent. It was no doubt the good HSC results that accounted for the comparative failure of an educational experiment initiated by one of the commercial teachers, Mrs. Gwynneth Moore, at this time. Mrs. Moore offered a Year 12 commercial course of study to the students as an alternative to the HSC year, and the Department of Education provided a generous grant to re-organize the commercial room to accommodate this course. As most students expected to do well in HSC only four girls took advantage of this opportunity but, thanks to the good offices of Mrs. Moore, they all found jobs at the end of the year.

When Miss Northey retired at the end of 1977 her departure was much regretted for the constant support she had given to staff and for her watchfulness over the welfare of the students.

*"Throughout her years at our school she has maintained the high standard and has been a great Principal."*

Editorial,  
School Magazine, 1981.



**Principal - Miss Noela Eury 1978 - 1981**

In 1978 the school tradition of having caring Principals was continued when Miss Noela Eury took up her appointment. She was pleased to take charge of "an excellent school and staff", though she could see that "the buildings definitely needed a paint job", and her aim was to uphold the school's good reputation. During a period of educational innovations, continued teacher union activity and a burgeoning student population, Miss Eury was to steer the school with unvarying good humour and serenity.

The HSC classes during this period showed an excellent retention rate, ranging between sixty and seventy in number and including an increasing number of overseas students. The study of music was extended in the school with the appointment of more instrumental teachers. The girls could now study woodwind, string and brass instruments, and the foundations of the school's future orchestra and bands were being laid.

In 1979 the school enrolment was in excess of seven hundred and seventy and there were sixty-six teaching staff. As the school population grew, the need for accommodation increased and this meant more portable classrooms, rather than the desirable larger school building. Lack of Government assistance also meant that the school's cyclic maintenance programme had to be deferred from year to year. Thanks to the efforts of the Advisory Council and the Parents' Associations, some improvements were made to the school during Miss Eury's term of office. A new canteen was built and a shelter provided in the quadrangle. The staffroom was also extended. Plans for a library extension were always a priority in the minds of the Principal, staff and parents in these years but not, unfortunately, for the Government.

At this time there were moves by the Education Department to try to amalgamate the school with Beaumaris High School, which had a steadily declining enrolment. There was also an attempt to have classes moving between the two schools, particularly at the senior level. From this time on, the status of Mentone Girls' High School as an all girls' school was under threat and the only solution was to ensure that student numbers remained high. This entailed logistical problems but was very easy to accomplish, as so many parents wished their daughters to be educated in a single sex environment and the school's reputation remained excellent.

1980 was the school's 25th Anniversary. To mark the occasion, drinking glasses, mugs and cups and saucers bearing the school's crest and the anniversary date were manufactured. A "return to the school" was held on a Sunday afternoon, to which past students flocked in their hundreds from all over the state, and many happy reunions took place between old classmates and their former teachers. The success of this occasion testified eloquently to the place held by the school in the minds and hearts of many students and teachers.



**THE SCHOOL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - 1980**  
Mr. Reg Marlow, School Councillor, Miss Gwen Northey, Miss Annie McLennan,  
Mrs. Barbara Lowther, President of School Council, and Miss Noela Eury.

In 1981 the new HSC was introduced, with new syllabus requirements and new regulations. Under this system, at least thirty per cent of the students' work was to be evaluated by the teachers, and students found themselves working harder than ever to complete their various subject "options" before the deadlines. Some reported themselves distinctly soured by this experience.

*"It becomes painfully obvious that the idiot who claimed competition brings out the best in us never attempted HSC."*

Karen Mapleston Year 12  
School magazine 1981

Much more popular was the now established custom of sending Year 10 girls out into the workforce for a week to gain work experience. This helped them to make career choices and most of them found it was not only a very worthwhile exercise but also very enjoyable.

In these years the Year 11 camp programme was extended from the existing ski camp to include the whole of Year 11. Now there was a choice of several camps to such places as Mount Bawbaw, Central Australia and Tasmania. A camp for Year 9 was also introduced.

Another popular innovation, for the Year 12 students at least, was the decision to allow HSC students to discard their outgrown uniforms in favour of casual dress.

During the last eighteen months of Miss Eury's time at the school an Internal Review was conducted, during which committees of teachers and parents, with some help from students, summarised and discussed the curriculum, activities and needs of the school. This was in preparation for a visit by a Board of External Review to the school in 1982.

When Miss Eury retired at the end of 1981, she expressed both regret and pleasure at her release from "fifty-five years of being at school". Her last words to the students repeated what she had often told them during her four years at Mentone: "Live up to your school motto, 'Virtute et Labore'."





*"The school is to be complimented  
for its caring attitude towards its pupils."*  
External Board of Review, 1982

## Acting Principal - Mr Peter Richardson 1982

When Mr. Peter Richardson became Acting Principal in 1982, he was to preside over what the Chairman of the Victorian State Board of Education described as "the end of an era in education and the beginning of a new era". Major changes in education were being planned throughout Australia in this year, and especially in Victoria.

For a week in February an External Review Board visited the school and its associated community. In general, the courses of study offered and the way they were presented met with approval and only some minor modifications were suggested. Recommendations were made for improving the facilities of Physical Education, Drama and Music but no sources of finance were provided to achieve this. A particular Computer System was recommended and, thanks to parent donations and a little help from the Education Department, the school had the basis of this Computer System by the end of the year. In December, a further grant of \$1,500 from the Education Department was provided to expand this system.

Over a short period of time the administration of High and Technical Schools was to be combined and many personnel from Head Office were to move into schools. This decision was to affect Mentone Girls' High School in the near future, leading to the choice of Principal in 1983 and, eventually, to a change in the name of the school as well as the kind of curriculum it offered.

There were no changes of curriculum in 1982, however, as the findings of the External Review Board, staff opinion and student/parent demand found no immediate change to be necessary. The only new subject was Human Movement Studies as an elective at Year 10

level. There was also an emphasis of the general trend to teach students to analyse data and think, rather than memorise facts.

By the end of Term 1 the exterior of the school buildings had finally been painted and during the year another four portable classrooms were moved onto the site to cater for the smaller class sizes and the number of subjects offered. The enrolment remained steady at just below eight hundred and in 1982 there was a teaching staff of seventy. There were constant enquiries from parents of daughters from other schools and other areas.

This year Mentone found itself in an expanded Bayside group of schools for sporting events and consequently eligible to enter only one competitor instead of two in the first round of swimming and athletics. In spite of this Mentone Girls' won the aggregate shields for both swimming and athletics. Three of the girls earned interstate trips with the Victorian team: Yvonne Waters Year 8 (athletics), Louisa Simmons Year 10 (cross country running) and Rosalind Etty Year 11 (hurdles and high jump). The junior gymnastics team once again won the All High School finals.

In 1982 Mrs. Bev White organized and supervised a debating team which competed in the evenings during Terms 1 and 2, mainly against teams of boys from private schools. This team was very often successful, finishing second on the ladder. Mrs. White continued to guide debating teams to similar success during her following years at the school.



SILVER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL'S  
TRAVELLING THEATRE - 1984

An innovative end of year activity was the Travelling Theatre, the brainchild of drama teacher Mrs. Maggie Morrison. The aim was to unite one year level in an activity which would develop a good school/community relationship. Over two hundred and eight Year 9 girls were involved over a period of a week - three days of preparations and two days of performances. The girls walked many kilometres, colourfully arrayed, led by a white Clydesdale horse (lent by Councillor Bisset of Sandringham) and a beautifully decorated cart (courtesy of art teacher, Mr. Michael Stewart). Six schools were visited and the troupe also entertained the public in the Mentone shopping area and near Black Rock beach, where coins were dropped into the girls' collection tins to cover expenses and make a small profit. This was such a successful event that it was to be repeated for the next seven years.

Altogether this had been an eventful year and one which presaged many future changes. Mr. Richardson had worked very hard as Acting Principal, while continuing to teach a maths class and coaching students in his "spare" moments. In his article for the 1982 school magazine he told the students, "Developing skills is far more important than 'winning'. . . . You may learn more by losing." These words are characteristic of the support and encouragement that he was always ready to offer both students and staff.

Mr. Richardson was Acting Principal once again for a term in 1985, when the Principal took long service leave. He had been Deputy Principal at Mentone for the final ten years of his successful teaching career, applying for early retirement in 1987.



*"Improvements which have long been mooted  
may now become a reality."*

Mr. M. Constable  
Twenty-ninth Annual Report, 1983

## Principal - Mr Michael Constable 1983-1987

Mr. Michael Constable was the first male Principal of Mentone Girls' High School and was to be the only one, since he oversaw the change of the school's name to Mentone Girls' Secondary College in 1988. His five years at Mentone were a period of important educational changes and he also implemented a great many improvements to the school buildings and facilities. Coming from the Head Office of the Education Department, he had useful contacts and he was also able to generate enough enthusiasm in the school community to raise funds for the necessary improvements to his new school.

In 1983 many students and staff were heavily involved in fund raising activities associated with the School Building Project, which included plans for upgrading administration and staff work areas, a larger sick bay, counselling and conference rooms, senior teacher and bursar's offices and an enlarged library space. The School Council was active in this area, providing funds for the upgrading of hall lighting and a science laboratory among other facilities. Using Regional funds, the Council also supervised contracts for carpeting, music portable classroom security and maintenance work. The combined efforts of the school community succeeded in raising \$32,500 by the end of the year.

Only minor variations to the school curriculum occurred in 1983, as the academic nature of the curriculum was to be maintained while including new technology subjects. The school concert band was established this year and a highly successful school production of 'Oliver' utilised the talents of both students and staff. This production raised \$3,200 towards the School Building Project and established the tradition of spectacular musical productions which are now a feature of the school's programme.



During a period of enthusiastic fund raising, Social Service was not forgotten and, under the leadership of Mr. Jim Williams and Mrs. Jessie Jans in particular, many girls continued to work for the welfare of those in greater need than themselves.

In 1984 a new format of administration was introduced with the Education Department's decision to grant more responsibility to school councils. From now on the Council was to consist of the Principal, seven parents, five teachers, one member of the Ladies' Auxiliary and two students. It would also have the power to co-opt four others and there was the opportunity for other students to be present at the meetings without taking part. Schools were now expected to develop their own curriculum to suit the needs of their particular students.

By 1985 the Education Department had become the Ministry of Education, and sitting on numerous committees to determine the curriculum and structure of the school system had become an extra demand on the time of many teachers. An important aim for Mentone at this time was the preservation of the position of girls' schools in the state education system.

In this year the leaders of the Curriculum Committee, Ms. Jeni Miles and Mr. Jon McMillan, organized an In-service on the topic "Girls' Schools and Technology", at which the HSC co-ordinator, Mrs. Win Dennis, was asked to speak. Mrs. Dennis documented the imbalance in subject choices by Mentone's HSC students and their consequent career limitations, and proposed the introduction of a practical subject called Technology. In 1986 a pilot course was introduced, offering Year 10 girls the opportunity of studying electronics for one term and computer studies for another term. This experiment proved highly successful, thanks largely to the assistance given by the Principal and staff of Keysborough Technical School. Since then, a term of Mechanics Technology has been added to the course.

The demand for the kind of education offered by Mentone Girls' High School was evidenced by the fact that the school enrolment this year was eight hundred and ninety-nine, the highest for a decade, and there were waiting lists at each level from Years 7 to 10. By 1986 the education authorities had accepted that the local community required a large girls' school to be maintained at Mentone, though the School Council still had to work through some fine detail before the school's long term future was assured.

Other items of interest in 1986 included the opening of a library extension and new administrative offices, including a Conference Room and an Interview Room, by the Minister for Education, Mr. Ian Cathie, the introduction of Equal Opportunity programmes, the school's first participation in the Rock Eisteddfod and some superb musical performances under the inspiring baton of music teacher, Miss Jenny Wills.

1987 was the final year that the school would be designated as a High School. It was also the first time that the school year would be divided into two semesters of two terms each. A very strong demand for places in the school at all levels had continued and there was a record enrolment of one hundred and seventy-eight at Year 11 and over one hundred in Year 12, the first year to be called VCE students rather than HSC students, though the implementation of the VCE was yet to come. The school had clearly satisfied the

Government's long-term objective of retaining seventy percent of students into Years 11 and 12, and its future as an all-girls' school seemed assured. There was a total enrolment of nine hundred and three students at the school in 1987 and as vacancies occurred they were rapidly filled.

The school's philosophy of Equal Opportunity for girls and Affirmative Action was in line with the objectives of the new VCE and the Equal Opportunity Committee organized a number of activities, including a Technology Day.

Under the management of Mrs. Resi Allsop, assisted by many mothers working in a voluntary capacity and some Year 10 girls, the canteen had made a profit of some \$7,000. The School Council's large scale series of landscaping projects was nearing completion and the Council had also bought a class set of computers.

Mentone Girls' High School had ended on a highly satisfactory note of achievement and optimism.

## MENTONE GIRLS' SECONDARY COLLEGE 1988 - 1995

*"We should all be confident of the school's future in 1988 and beyond,  
especially as the newly named Mentone Girls' Secondary College."*

Mr. M. Constable  
Annual Report, 1987

### Principal - Mr Michael Constable 1988

Mentone Girls' Secondary College commenced its history with nine hundred and five students, including a record one hundred and sixteen in Year 12, eighty-five teaching staff and four office staff, all of whom were named Margaret! 1988 developed very much according to early planning and expectations and was a most auspicious beginning for the "new" school.

Two staff curriculum days were held this year on the topics "Catering for individual differences at Mentone Girls' Secondary College" and "Introduction of the VCE at Mentone Girls' Secondary College". These formal curriculum days were a springboard to launch extensive ongoing reviews in both of these areas. There was increasing participation by the girls in subjects such as maths, science, accounting, computer science and technology but music and drama also continued to play a vital and enriching role in the school programme. Money raised from public musical performances enabled the music faculty to add to its stock of musical instruments, and the Travelling Theatre acquired a tandem trailer, as Silver, the Clydesdale, was now literally too long in the tooth to play a further part in the performances.

The active Physical Education faculty was limited only by lack of a properly equipped gymnasium in its aim to achieve fitness, co-ordination and confidence for all students. A variety of recreational pursuits was offered at Year 10, including self-defence, weight-training, golf, cycle touring and indoor cricket. In December the school participated for the first time in the Great Victorian Bike Ride, when a party of twenty-six, led by Miss Bernadette Murphy, set off on a nine-day tour with two thousand other cyclists. On

Mother's Day about seventy students and some staff competed in the Sussan Fun Run, winning a television set and video recorder as the school with the largest number of participants.

In 1988 the school held its first Annual Creative Arts Festival and mounted an art/craft display in the foyer of the Dallas Brooks Hall. Media studies and photography were gaining rapidly in popularity and the links between the arts and science and technology were being strengthened, in line with the school's technology thrust. A relocatable engineering workshop equipped with \$70,000 worth of specialist equipment was scheduled for use for the start of 1989.

The Parents and Friends Group, formed this year in place of the earlier Parents' Association, was soon in its stride and linking well with the School Council and the Ladies' Auxiliary. Mr. Constable was always quick to acknowledge the school's debt to those parents who gave voluntary assistance so generously, often without waiting to be asked.

When Mr. Constable announced that he had decided to apply for early retirement, the school community regretted the loss of a highly able and hard-working Principal who had guided the school through a very challenging period of adjustment to new educational expectations, and who had helped to ensure the school's future as a single-sex college.

*"Ms. Lesley Boston's involvement with us since her appointment has shown that we made a very wise choice and has vindicated the process that allows the school community to select its own Principal."*  
School Council Annual Report, 1989



**Principal - Ms Lesley Boston**

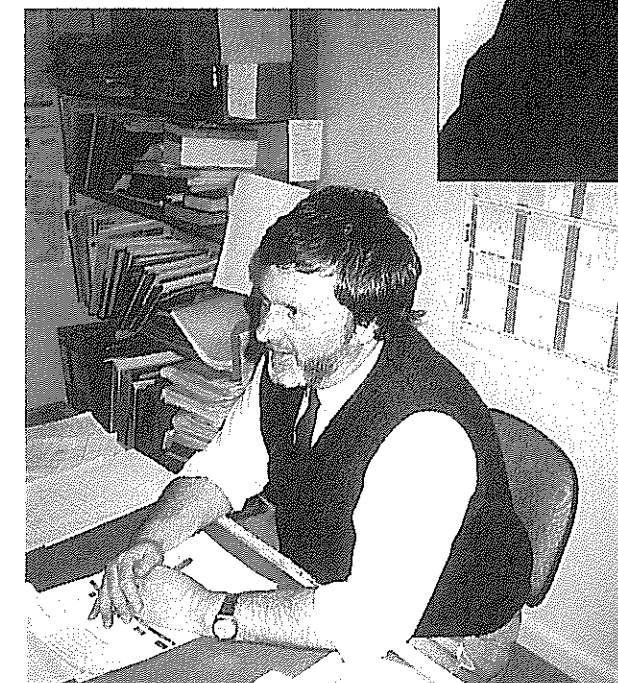
**1989 -**

Ms. Lesley Boston commenced her duties as Principal of Mentone Girls' Secondary College in the second semester of 1989. She had assumed leadership of the college in a period of unprecedented educational change and uncertainty, but she was to prove more than equal to the challenge and would ensure that the college continued to achieve high standards while offering its students a very wide range of subjects. In her first Annual Report, Ms. Boston paid tribute to the excellent work of Mrs. Helen Overend and Mr. Jim Williams as Acting Principal and Acting Deputy Principal respectively during the first semester of that year. She thanked them and all her staff for making her transition to the position of Principal as smooth as possible.

Ms. Boston's staff consisted of eighty-seven teachers and fourteen ancillary staff, including the invaluable office Margarets. In 1989 the school enrolment was nine hundred and three, nearly three hundred being in Years 11 and 12, with a record one hundred and twenty in Year 12. There were the usual waiting lists for places at Years 7 to 10 and this demand remained high during the next seven years.

The new two-year Victorian Certificate of Education, representing a major curriculum and assessment change, was to be introduced in a number of gradual stages. The teaching staff had completed many arduous hours of preparation and planning by the time the VCE was fully implemented at the college in 1991 and this ensured a smooth and successful transition. Information was constantly disseminated through special Parent and Student Information Sessions. A priority of the Curriculum Committee was to ensure the maintenance of high quality education in relation to the VCE, and a review of the Year 7 to 10 curriculum was to be held over the next two years.

**Mrs. Helen Overend**



**Mr. Jim Williams**

The age of computers had well and truly arrived by the early '90s, bringing with it new challenges of finding qualified staff in competition with the business world and learning how to master the potential of the new hardware and software. From now on, computers in classrooms, offices, staffrooms and the library would rarely be out of action, and students with home computers would be submitting homework of unparalleled neatness and imaginative presentation.

The Technology courses offered to Years 10 and 11 (and to Year 12 from 1990) were eagerly sought by students. Thanks to the high public profile of these courses a local engineering firm, Briggs and Stratton, donated a small engine and training assistance to supplement the college's resources.



On the cultural side, the participation of senior students in Art activities at the college was four times the state average and the number of students wanting to learn a musical instrument and play in the college bands was steadily increasing.

The Students' Representative Council was playing an increasingly important part in the college community and 1989 was a particularly busy year for its sixty-six members. They raised \$5,000 for the school bus fund and participated in three Bayside Student Forums among other activities.

Ms. Boston's first impressions of the college ("enjoyment, commitment and purpose") had proved to be correct, and the only glum note in 1989 was the news that the Southern Metropolitan Region had disallowed funding this financial year for the proposed Technology Centre. When the Education Minister visited the school in semester two she left with a particularly favourable impression of the school.

1990 was an equally busy and successful year. Two highlights were the re-introduction of the House Choral Competition after twenty years and (at last!) the establishment of a successful Past Students' Association, which by 1994 had over one hundred members. This Association has been strongly supported by the Principal and the Vice Principal, Ms. Carolyn Nield, which is one of the reasons for its success, another reason being the enthusiastic leadership of the Association's President, Mrs. Dot Galloway.

The largest area of change in 1991 was the introduction of the full VCE, which despite extensive planning in earlier years brought considerable workload to all concerned, especially the dedicated teaching staff. The VCE results in 1990 had far surpassed the state average, reflecting the excellent work being done by the students and their teachers, and setting the pattern for the years since then.

As always, school affairs were partly determined by conditions in the wider community, and the economic recession made the task of raising funds for college maintenance and programmes increasingly difficult. Thanks to parents who gave generous amounts of their time and proper consideration to voluntary contributions, the College Council was able to provide the eagerly awaited school bus in 1991, as well as other facilities and some general maintenance of grounds and buildings.

The curriculum audit had required a comprehensive curriculum at junior levels and in line with this, computer-keyboarding and technology were to be introduced at Years 7 and 8 in 1992, as well as the study of Japanese in addition to French and German.

Transition from primary to secondary school continued to be an important priority of the college and close links were maintained with the local primary schools. In 1991 a Peer Support Programme was successfully implemented, using Year 10 girls to provide support for Year 7 students in their first term at the college. Special needs were catered to by the Differential Education Programme and the Integration Programme. Other programmes for Year 7, such as the popular Twilight Sports and Year 7/Year 12 Fancy Dress Party, continued to be organized.

1991 saw considerable public controversy over the effects of the VCE on both public and school libraries. In anticipation of greater demands on the college library, prior planning had been undertaken as far back as 1989 and this was now paying dividends. The reference section was built up, holding of periodicals was extended and full computerisation of the library was in progress.

The Environment Committee, led by Mr. Jeff Sheldon, had raised student awareness of environmental issues and in 1991 an Environment Duty Group of students was organized, which has continued to function very successfully in improving the appearance of the college grounds. In this year the Equal Opportunity Committee and the Professional Development Committee were also very active and successful in supporting staff in their efforts to improve the quality of their teaching. Ms. Boston praised the hard work and effectiveness of all her staff in 1991, again making a special acknowledgment of the loyal support of Mrs. Overend and Mr. Williams, who had once more acted as Principal and Vice Principal respectively during Ms. Boston's period of leave in Term 3.

An innovation in 1991 was the decision to move the college's Presentation Evening from the Nina Carr Hall to Moorabbin Town Hall, enabling the college to accommodate all levels of students and their parents at one time, instead of holding separate functions for Senior and Junior Award Evenings and Afternoons. This arrangement not only brought the whole college together for an important end of year function but also made it possible to present the Year 12 Graduation Ceremony more effectively. To mark Presentation Evening as a special occasion many staff now wear their graduation gowns and hoods, and the college has also been honoured by the presence of some distinguished guest speakers.



FIRST PRESENTATION EVENING - MOORABBIN TOWN HALL 1991



**TECHNOLOGY CENTRE**

The main highlight of 1992 was the completion of the long-awaited Technology Centre, now used for the teaching of all technology subjects from Years 7 to 12. The completion of the centre was the culmination of seven years of effort by the staff and administration, in particular the efforts of Mrs. Win Dennis.

1992 was also a sad year for many associated with the college, as this was the year that Nina Carr died after a courageous battle with cancer. Ms. Boston, who had become a close friend of Nina's during the last three years of her life, took great pains to organize an event that all who attended it will remember. Nina had made provision in her will for the memorial service which she knew that those who loved her - and they were very many - would want to have. The Nina Carr Hall was filled to overflowing with past students and teachers who had known her either at Mentone or at MacRobertson Girls' High School.

Nina's request had been, "*no sad songs for me*", and the mood of the speeches and of the whole gathering was one of celebration of a remarkable woman's life and achievements.

### **School of the Future.**

In 1993, Mentone Girls' Secondary College became a pilot school in the Schools of the Future Programme. The Directorate of School Education, which had replaced the Ministry of Education in 1992, obviously had great confidence in the future of the college and its ability to be self-managing. By the end of the year, the College Charter was completed, which gave a profile of the college and set out its goals and priorities. The college was funded for a three year period, during which it would develop a Strategic Plan to implement the College Charter.

The official opening of the Technology Centre was held this year after considerable planning and organization. The programme included demonstrations provided by a number of companies and educational institutions, as well as Year 8 technology students. While these demonstrations were being filmed in the Technology Centre, staff and distinguished guests were in the Nina Carr Hall for the official opening by Professor D. Mansell from the University of Melbourne.



**Professor D. Mansell & Ms Lesley Boston  
at the Official Opening of the Technology  
Centre, 1993**

Another very important project begun in 1993 was a much needed library extension, which would almost double the existing floor space and allow far greater access to all students. This had long been recognised as the school's most urgent requirement, and by the end of the year work on the library extension had started. Staff, students and parents worked extremely hard to raise funds for this ambitious project.

At this time there was increased emphasis placed on student outcomes, with pressure to increase the percentage of Year 12 students proceeding to TAFE courses if they failed to gain University entry or find employment. The decision to allow all TAFE subjects to count towards the VCE, though not towards University entry, meant that the college had to consider whether some of these subjects might provide better options for some students than some existing subjects. On the other hand, Melbourne and Monash Universities were now offering a range of first year university subjects for gifted Year 12 students, and the



college was considering the possibility of some Unit 3 and 4 studies being taken in Year 11. Such variation reflected the growing awareness that different students have different needs and that the best environment would be one that offered a variety of approaches to suit all these needs.

In line with these developments, a special Curriculum Review Committee was formed to consider if Vertical Modular Grouping in the middle school could be made more effective, allowing both specially talented students and slow learners to proceed at an appropriate pace. In this year, the "Small Change" Grant enabled teams of talented students to be entered in the Future Problem Solving and the Tournament of Minds competitions. In 1994 special electives were to be offered for advanced middle school students in Future Problem Solving and Maths Problem Solving, as well as a language recovery elective for students with non-English speaking backgrounds or those with serious problems in this area.

New report formats were introduced in 1994 for Years 7 to 10, emphasising the "Work Requirement" approach in each subject, seeking to define the field of study and the learning process and to report on student outcomes with a detailed written description. It was intended that the new format would provide continuity between Years 7 to 10 and the VCE. (Students of the '50s can compare this system with their old report books containing all their results during all their time at the school and mercilessly comparing their marks with the class average in every subject. Not to mention the Form Teacher's attempt to summarise the remarks of all the subject teachers in a few lines!)



THE LIBRARY IN 1966



The main highlight of 1994 was undoubtedly the completion of the wonderful new library extension, which was officially opened by the State Librarian, Ms. Helen Tait.

The library staff began the year with the re-organization of the collection, as all material had to be removed during the building of the new extension. New shelving and furniture was purchased, including carrels for senior students and lecture chairs for the new seminar room. During the re-organization the excellent Year 7 library orientation programme operated as usual in Term 1, ending with sessions on the library computer terminals. Parent volunteers provided support for the librarians in processing new books and repairing damaged material.

After an initial period of inconvenience ("Year 12 students are not allowed in the library!") and much hard work for the library staff, the benefits of the new building were very obvious. Today up to three classes can be booked into the library at any one time, including a class viewing a video in the seminar room, and visitors to the school are highly impressed by the effect of spaciousness, light and convenience. Now there is room for the library collection to expand further and many parents have responded to the "Buy a Book" fund-raising effort.

Later in the year, the addition of a satellite dish prepared the way for students of the future to participate in interactive television classes beamed from educational centres in many different places.

By the end of 1994 the college was obviously flourishing and ready to celebrate its 40th anniversary in fine style in 1995.



### **"Forty years on . . . . ."**

1995 - the year the school celebrates its fortieth birthday! Forty is middle-aged in human terms but young for a school, and we can only guess how it will develop in the next forty years. The rapid advances in technology and educational policies of the last ten years already make it a completely different school from the one founded by Nina Carr in 1955, quite apart from the physical changes wrought by the passing years. This year, 1995, the school community can look back on the school's origins, marvel at how it has changed and celebrate its triumphant survival. On the other hand, Nina Carr's words in the fifties still express the main objective of the college: *"We hope that the time (the students) have spent at this school will help to give them courage to set for themselves and to pursue the highest possible standards and that they will become useful and respected members of the society of which they will form a part."*

Such an important anniversary calls for celebration and Ms. Boston has been busy organizing appropriate events. At the beginning of the year she described the early days of the school to the students in assembly and a past student from the 1960s described the school as it was in her time. It is hoped that more speakers will be available to address the girls later in the year.

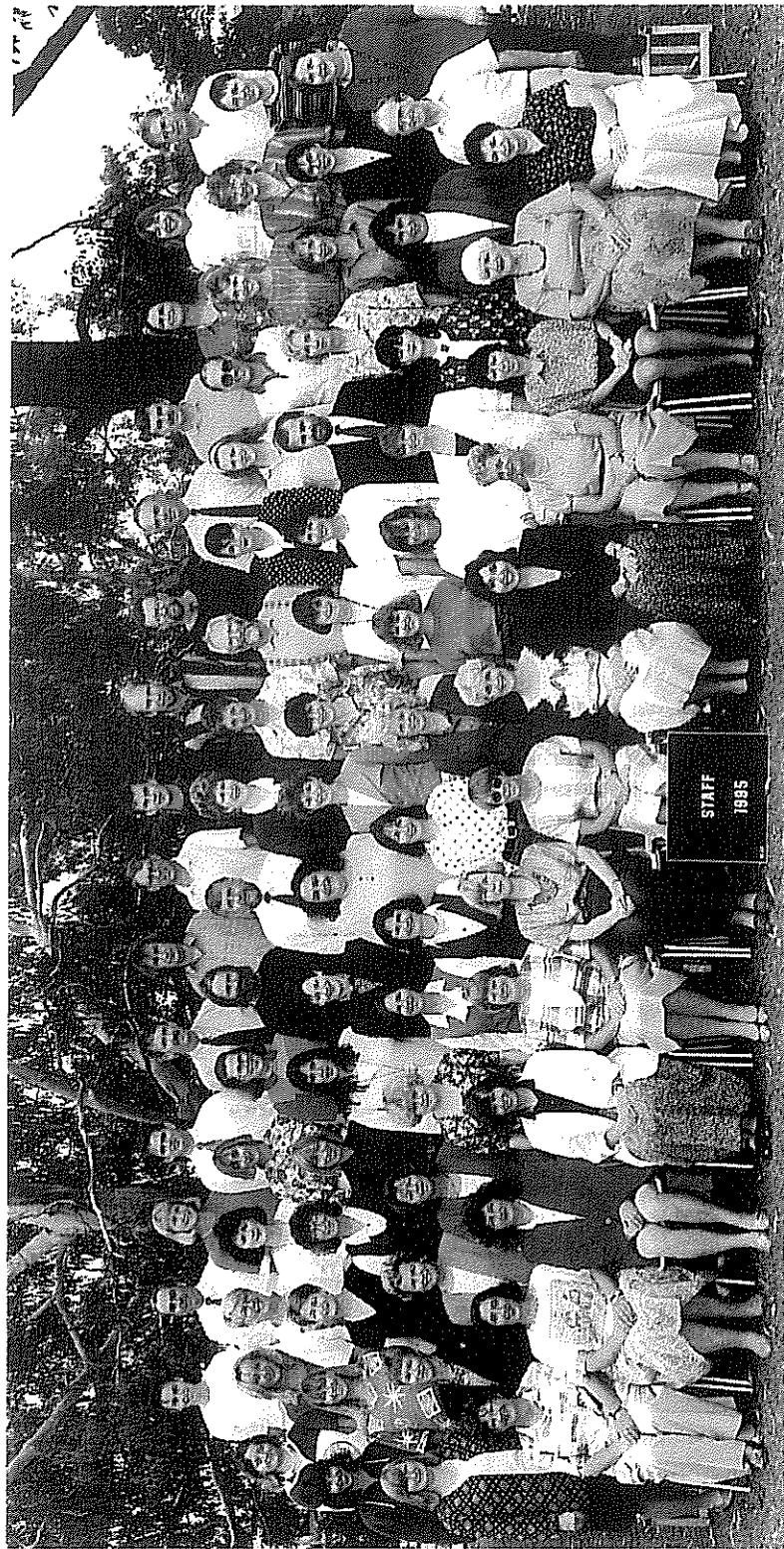
At the Past Students' Association dinner in March, the members acknowledged the anniversary and looked forward to the planned reunion on Open Day, September 10th. An enthusiastic committee of representatives from the College Council, Parents and Friends Association, the Past Students' Association and present students and staff are organizing this function and it is hoped that some past members of staff will attend.

To further honour the year a stained glass window has been installed in the library and Nina Carr's first garden will be planted with new rose trees.

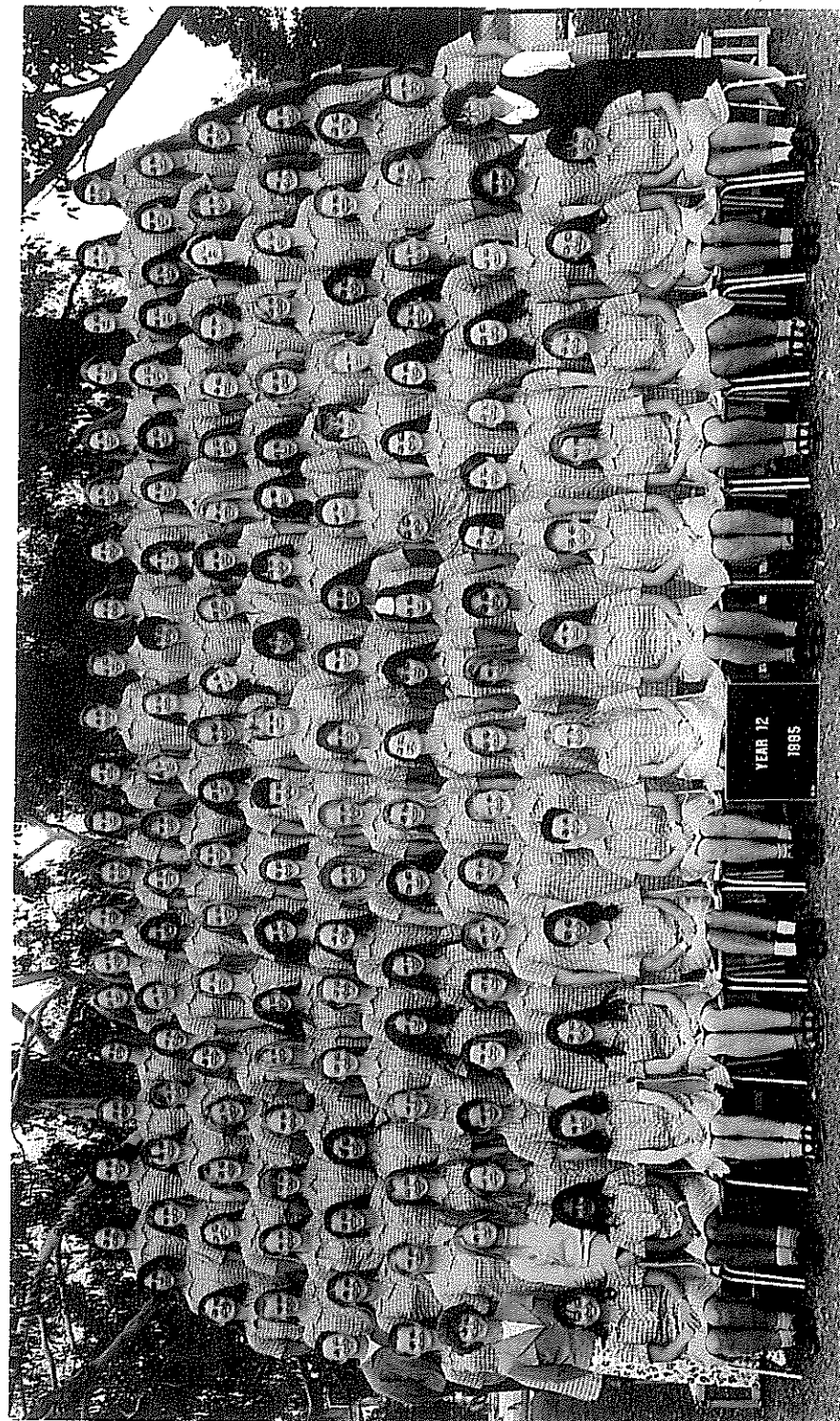
The first birthday party for the school was a special breakfast held on the last day of Term one. Each form organized its own breakfast with direction from the Students' Representative Council and the assistance of form teachers. The breakfasts ranged from splendid affairs with elegant white tablecloths, fruit juice, croissants and coffee to "McDonalds" or chips and soft drinks. The Madrigal choir sang 'Happy Birthday' over the Public Address system, and art teacher, Mrs. Judy Sullivan, set up birthday signs and a large mock birthday cake with candles and streamers in the foyer entrance. Everyone joined in the fun and joined together in wishing their school -

### **'HAPPY BIRTHDAY MENTONE GIRLS' SECONDARY COLLEGE!'**





ROW 5: Louise Rieniels, Colin Barnes, Kippie Sheehy, Dominic Santos, Laurie Morrison, Michael Dunkley, Tim Roberts, David Shillabeer, David Forsyth, Jon McMillan, Gary Hamilton, Trevor Thomas, Jane Wainwright, Lorraine Frederiksen, Larry Grant.  
 ROW 4: Sue Cook, Kelli Hopper, Judy Sullivan, Clare Selir, Helen Gallo, Elaine Roberts, Geoff Perks, Bill Longden, Kerry Reid, Eri Tan, Tony Dickson, Pam Pitt, Carolyn Vanstan, Bill Murray, Julie Young, Margaret Howe, Vivienne Tate.  
 ROW 3: Pam Evans, Jane Hunt, Christine Ray, Jan Dunne, Heather Brown, Leeann Engblom, Vivienne Healy, Karen MacDonald, Jeanne Bott, Dawn Bennett, Margaret Ford, Julie Ayers, Rob Wallace, Marilyn Simmons, Karen Meyer, Bonnie McCallum, Carole Hackwill.  
 ROW 2: Judy Lehors, Julie Williams, Leonie Horvath, Sandra Thomas, Anne Gamble, Maureen King, Anna Earls, Linda Brown, Martine McLoud, Lesley Burgess, Joan Barnett, Paula Cohen, Jennie Oliver, Michelle Hawkes, Tony Murphy.  
 FRONT: Daniel Haselt, Shirley Milissas, Bella Grebler, Vanda Drazenovic, Carolyn Nield, Helen Hook, Lesley Boston, Jackie de Ferranti, Georgi Smith, Jeni Hughes, Helen Mischel, Enid Morrison, Rachel Salomon, (Teaching Staff Absent: Tim Clifford, Luke de Munk, Win Dennis, Judy Firestone, Sue Kinnealy, Ray Scheibel, Henry Silver, Mike Stewart, Michael Warden.)  
 YEAR: STAFF



ROW 8: Nicola Coe, Elizabeth Guerra, Katrina Davis, Jody Gunn, James Collins, Jessinda Coe, Nikki Jolly, Renee Furness, Rebecca Lane, Tara Powell, Amy Carson, Eliza Johnstone, Emma Bos, Anna Kyriakou, Sarah Cooper, Olivia O'Shea, Shelly Campbell, Samantha Fisher, Melanie Rankine, Parnie Martin, Christine Bisset, Irene Westcott, Kelle McDermott, Mandy Delvecchio, Louise Stewart-Jacks, Ellen Davidge, Denisa Javorka, Nancy Clayton, Lisa O'Shea, Silver-Jade Potter, Eileen Archer, Debbie Condon, Karoline Weller, John Kinnear, Margaret Adams, Jennifer Donegan, Treka Potter, Maria Georgoulis, Kelli Graham, Emily Cowan, Monika Gadecki, Dana McCooper, Nicole Parker, Breanna Elston, Fama Kaya, Georgina Cava, Martine Hoult, Carla Griffiths, Caroline Johnson, Brooke Wilson, Kelli Overs, Camilla Threadgold, Rowena White, Sarah O'Brien, Peter Melina, Sophie Cooper, Kelly Tolan, Kerry Rush, Jaimee Burga, Elizabeth McCellan, Sarah Panozzo, Sharon Bodsworth, Alicia Lardon, Susan McAllen, Eleonora Karakehagias, Narelle Williams, Lisa Gorey, Monica Neve, Jenni Flew, Rebecca Furey, Amy Rush, Kerry Tolan, Kerry Rush, Jaimee Burga, Elizabeth McCellan, Sarah Panozzo, Sharon Bodsworth, Alicia Lardon, Susan McAllen, Eleonora Karakehagias, Fleur Dwyer, Jenny Mawby, Elanor Feeders, Briony Irwin, Angela Zagas, Clare Fisher, Leigh Fersterer, Brooke Sullivan, Penny Schleiger, Fiona Caculovic, Miranda Harwood, Andrea Ingram, Marianne Wray, Cony Verdounellis, Tasia Karatasos, Krista Bird, Emma Miratore, Erin Vemall, Clare Fisher, Leigh Fersterer, Brooke Sullivan, Penny Schleiger, Fiona Caculovic, Miranda Harwood, Andrea Ingram, Marianne Wray, Michelle Canterford, Leanne Taylor, Helen Soldatos, Naomi McKinnick, Angela Salamoussa, Annelle Patchett, Kelly Butler, Susan Hawkins, Rhianna Bell, Natalie Edwards, Danielle Fountain, Aynur Bockurt, Anthea Selkirk, Ozlem Tan, Naomi Yamada, Nancy Hanna, Meltem Tavsanli, Patricia Sozo, Loretta Cambridge, Natalie Taranio, Shae Hildebrand, Lena Wurke, Kate Newman, Julia Kasper, Naomi Bessard, Devna East, Ila Husrid, Mrs Dunne, Catherine Gosney, Kelle Hendrie, Danielle Boucher, Melanie Webster, Vasudha Kumar, Nicole Tumiali, Stacey Findlay, Sachiko Miyashita, Irene Rahman, Natalie Skinner, Beth Gazzara, Thalia Karamalis, Danielle Elias, Renay Whitehead, Samantha Botha, Heidi Little, Claire Hunter, Lisa Danna, Alice Apostolou, Vicki Jabalga, 12  
 TEACHERS: MRS DUNNE, MS JEANNE BOTT



## Acknowledgments

The chief sources of information used in writing this booklet were a short tape-recording made by Miss Nina Carr, Principals' Annual Reports, interviews with some Past Principals and Acting Principals, School Magazines and the personal memories of the author.

School Council records have been left for the person who eventually writes a comprehensive school history, this being only a brief overview of the last forty years.

Thanks are due to the above mentioned Principals and Acting Principals, to the members of the school's present teaching staff and office staff who patiently provided detailed information about the school today and to Ms. Lesley Boston, who wished this booklet to be written in honour of the school's 40th anniversary.



Pat Cerni

## AUTOGRAPHS