

## Carmen Malins

I attended Canterbury Girls High School from 1965 to 1970 when I completed my HSC.

Even though I considered myself to be a conscientious student I, together with various friends did get up to a bit of mischief from time to time. I must emphasise that at no stage did we consider any of our pranks to be malicious or hurtful to anyone.

From time to time during my 4th Form year I would be called upon to do "office duty". This "duty" involved ringing the bell at the end of classes. I would attend my class but about ten minutes prior to the end of the class I would walk down to the hall (now The Cantabrian Hall) and check the time on the clock. I was extremely diligent in this task except when I was in a Maths class. On these occasions I would move the time on the clock forward by ten minutes. As a result our Maths classes were cut short by ten minutes and mine even more as I had to leave a few minutes earlier to ring the bell.

We always had Roll Call at the start of the day. All the rolls were in a cabinet outside the Principal's Office in class order which made it easy for the Roll Call teacher to quickly grasp her particular roll as she walked to her classroom. However, occasionally we would swap the rolls around. As a result, within ten minutes there were teachers everywhere exchanging rolls and muttering not too pleasant words.

Towards the end of 1970 and before doing our HSC, as was the custom then, we were allowed to participate in what was called "muck up day". We 6th formers had planned our attack months beforehand. We collected newspapers which were stored in a car repair shop nearby. I recall the shop belonging to one of the parents of our group. By the time the day arrived for us to put our plan into practice we had collected hundreds of newspapers. We arrived at school a long time before the teachers. Our plan was to fill the staff room with screwed up newspapers. This was achieved by the time the first teacher arrived. Some of us (including me) were hidden on the floor underneath the mountain of papers. One after the other the teachers arrived all exclaiming their horror!!! Thankfully after their initial shock they all took it in good stride. We spent a good few hours later sweeping the papers out of the staff room and down the stairs into the playground. I heard later that poor Mrs Moore (Miss Saville) spent many following days at the incinerator.





Another little prank we used to play was on our English teacher, Mrs E. A few of us sat strategically around the room. At the appropriate time one of us would look up into the corner of the room and nudge another girl who would also look up. This continued for a time as we watched poor Mrs E get quite nervy as to what we were looking at. Ultimately she would take a peek and seeing there wasn't anything there would look quite embarrassed. She was a nervous sort of person and looking back now I hope we didn't put her off teaching.

Also, if students required a teacher we had to knock on the staff room door, open it slightly and call out the teacher's name. If the teacher was there he/she would come out or another teacher would call back that they weren't there. Sometimes we would knock on the door, call out a name and run away. Other girls were able to watch this "carry on" from afar.

The strange thing about all my escapades is that the teachers generally thought I was quite a model student as I always did my homework and generally paid attention in class. If only they knew. The main thing is however, that we never intended any harm and I'm sure that teachers didn't feel threatened.

In our first year at high school we all had to do a term of cooking, sewing and music which often proved quite a challenge. I can still recall doing "invalid cooking" with Mrs Topp (a very kind lady). We had to cook steamed fish and it smelled and tasted vile. When Mrs Topp left the room for a short time at some stage we all rolled up our fish in newspaper and placed them in the bins. It must have been a wonderful aroma when the bins were eventually emptied.

I also recall in music doing something called French Timing (I think it was called). The majority of us couldn't read music in the first place so this was rather difficult to say the least. We were presented with a sheet of music and then together had to read it out aloud eg: ta ta taffa teffy ta ahtay (that's how it sounded anyway). I still don't know what it was all about.

I enjoyed my six years at Canterbury Girls High very much but I am envious of the variety of subjects the students can now take. I wanted to do Geography as one of my elective subjects for the HSC but as I was also taking German this couldn't be done. The only other subject I could take with German was History which I did. I don't know whether the problem was a lack of teachers or just the way the curriculum was set up. How wonderful it would have been if we could have selected photography, wood work, design etc. Things certainly changed for the better there.

I am now involved with the Canterbury Ex-Students Association which I hope will continue to benefit the school and ex students alike.