

## Marion Malins

I commenced my high school years at CGHS in 1960 arriving in the same year as the wonderful Headmistress, Miss Nell Buckingham (it was very unusual at the time for students to know their teachers' first names). Those of you who study biology may still be using her textbook!

We first years (Year 7), in those days, had an "orientation" day where parents and enrolees were greeted by a prefect and shown around the school before being welcomed to the school and briefed on what to expect on our first day. It was all quite daunting and after primary school, the high school seemed so very imposing. I think we all managed to lose our way from time to time in those first months.

It was a rule that no student was permitted to walk to school up Canterbury Road from the station or into the school by the front door. We all had to walk up the back streets, the long way. We were also not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without permission – how things have changed! And, under no circumstances were we allowed to roam anywhere near the Principal's office (now a staff toilet outside the Cantabrian Hall). Nor were we permitted to be anywhere near the boys school unless we happened to live nearby.

The school uniform was:

In winter: A navy blue serge box-pleat tunic, to just below the knee length, white blouse and school tie, navy blazer, black stockings or white socks with black lace-up shoes, navy felt hat and navy gloves.

In summer: A navy blue light-weight box-pleat, to just below the knee length, white blouse and school tie, black stockings or white socks with black lace-up shoes, navy felt or panama hat and navy gloves.

PE: Green box-pleat tunic with a cord in your house colour around the waist, white blouse and matching green bloomers.

The uniform rules were quite strict, especially as to length and, bearing in mind that this was the period of the liberated 1960's when mini-skirts were all the rage, girls would often be hauled up to the Deputy Head who would have the offending short-skirted girl kneel on the floor while she measured the tunic's length and offered a reprimand. Once outside school grounds, many girls hitched their tunics up over their belts to shorten them. Prefects were expected to enforce the uniform regulations, but most generally turned a blind eye.

I really enjoyed my time at CGHS and the highlights for me were being a School Prefect, Vice-House Captain and House Captain of Darwin for my last two years.

Being in the school choir under the direction of Miss Elizabeth Jones was another of my favourite activities. We competed in the Sydney Schools' Eisteddfod Competition at the Conservatorium of Music each year and were successful on many occasions, beating our arch-rivals, Hornsby Girls' High on more than one occasion. The actress, Jackie Weaver was in the Hornsby choir during that time. Every year on Anzac Day, our choir attended the service at the Hyde Park Cenotaph which was broadcast on the radio. One year we performed at the ABC television studios, which was very exciting. And each year, with the Trinity Boys' Grammar choir, we took part in a choral concert at the Sydney Town Hall. We also made a 45 rpm record in 1962.

In 1963 we performed the operetta, Papageno across the road in the church hall. This was quite an undertaking at the time and was thoroughly enjoyed by both performers and audiences.

1964 was my last year at school before sitting for my Leaving Certificate (equivalent of the HSC which began in 1966). We school leavers all dressed up in our best outfits to attend the send-off put on for us by the incoming 5th year girls. Our much loved Principal, Miss Buckingham, retired from school life at the same time, so it was a sad occasion for most of us. Some of us were invited to Miss Buckingham's home after we had left school and it was lovely to be able to meet her in her retirement and tell her all about our new lives.

I really enjoyed my time at Canterbury Girls' High. I was fortunate to receive an excellent education under the guidance of some wonderful teachers (some not so great and some rather fierce) and it is a privilege to belong to the Cantabrian Ex-Students' Association and to be able to assist the school in the provision of scholarships, dux prizes and required equipment.

