



# Columba Catholic College

*Learn, Aspire & Achieve*

## PAST STUDENTS' NEWSLETTER

(Incorporating Past Students from St Columba's School,  
St Mary's College & Mt Carmel College)

NOVEMBER 2013

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Dear Past Students,

It seems such a short time ago that I was writing to you and summing up the 2012 Academic year. The time has gone so quickly and yet so much has happened over that time. Life in a school seems to mirror the ever increasing speed at which things happen in the wider community. Columba Catholic College is certainly no exception to this as every year seems to get busier with more activities, events, celebrations and presentations. Our students have extremely diverse skills and interests and we continue to make every attempt to meet their needs, meaning that more and more has to fit into less and less time.

Our building programme continued throughout 2012 and 2013. Since moving into our new secondary library and newly remodelled and refurbished Administration block, we have begun work on the complete redevelopment of the Mt. Carmel Campus Kitchen/Dining Room Block which incorporates the Edmund Rice Room—the presentation room for past student records and achievements. By the end of the year, the whole upstairs will be completed and the new Drama facility downstairs will be available for use in the new year.

At the time of writing this, the jack hammers are a constant reminder of the downside of the progress that we are making. Work is also well underway in the redevelopment of the Quinn block. For 2014, we will have three new classrooms incorporating 30 computers in each and a newly remodelled theatre. This will bring our total number of computer rooms to 12. At present, we are undertaking the early stages of introducing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach to technology, but it will be a number of years before its final implementation.

The majority of our General Learning Areas (GLA's) are now modern, fully air conditioned and contain data projectors (most with integrated sound systems). Both campuses have new modern libraries, covered multi-purpose sports facilities, a pool, and irrigated play areas. All teaching staff have their own laptops in a wifi network environment. We have made good progress in recent years to ensure our College moves with the times and continues to be among the best resourced Colleges in North Queensland.

We are awaiting the outcome of our application to completely modernise and refurbish the Good Samaritan Dormitory, our girls' home on the St. Mary's Campus. The application has passed through the early stages of the approval process and we are hoping to hear about the outcome in the next few weeks.

Our application to modernise the older sections of the St. Mary's Campus (involving 6 new classrooms as well as extensive renovations to others) is being finalised and will be submitted in the 2014 Block Grant Authority round. 2015 will be the year our application to modernise the Kruger Centre hits the BGA table. So our plans for development are extensive and vital as we move forward, ensuring the College has the necessary infrastructure to grow and be everything that our students want it to be.

One of the many innovations that we have introduced this year is the College Facebook page which is now readily available, updated regularly and provides up to date information in the form of links and captioned photographs. I invite you to visit the site and "like" our page, so that you will be linked to the site and all future information will come to you on a regular basis.

As you have no doubt become aware, in 2015, Queensland schools will have a major change when Year 7 formally becomes a part of the high school. Columba is in the fortunate position of being a leader in this move as our Year 7s have held an important role on our Secondary (Mt. Carmel) Campus since 2006. Our 7s are well placed to continue their success in this very important transitional year.

In July, I was able to travel to Brisbane to join with the Brisbane group of past students who meet each year to celebrate mass together and socialise afterwards. Each year, I give them an update on what is happening at the College. I invite all past students who are able to get there to come along and meet up with and renew friendships with other past students at this annual get together. Details about next year's gathering will go on Facebook prior to the event which occurs on the 3rd Sunday in July.

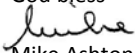
The implementation of the Australian National Curriculum is continuing as the new subjects to be included are finalised. Likewise we are seeing significant improvement in our NAPLAN results as a consequence of the additional time and effort being expended on our students' literacy and numeracy skills, both in the classroom and as a result of other tutoring opportunities.

As usual, sport plays a very important role in our co-curricular programme. Our students continue to shine in all fields of sporting endeavour. This year, I was able to witness our footballers go through the Confraternity competition undefeated. It was a pleasing result and a source of pride for all. Our netballers continue to improve and also went well at the QISSN Carnival held in conjunction with Confraternity. I watched six of their games and felt that they brought great credit to themselves, their families and the College.

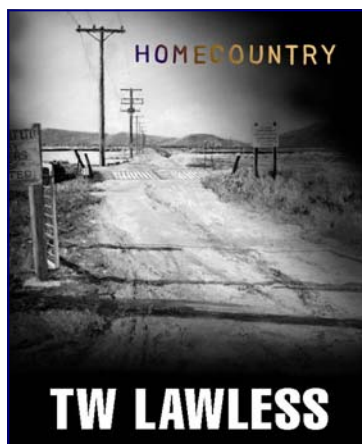
Finally, I wish all past students well and encourage you to be involved with the gatherings as they occur and to keep in touch via the website (due to be upgraded in the near future) and through Facebook. I hope that this Christmas brings you and your families much joy and happiness.

All the very best.

God bless

  
Mike Ashton  
Principal

Tom Bell (1969-1977) published his first novel during 2013. Called *Homecountry*, it is a gritty thriller set in Melbourne and North Queensland. The book is available online at present but will be available in bookstores early next year. Tom writes under the name T W Lawless and has a website - [www.twlawless.com](http://www.twlawless.com) where you can blog and purchase the book. Tom is currently working on his second book.



We are always delighted to receive news from past students, and we are sure you would too via the Past Students' Newsletters.

Please send information by post to  
**Jo-Anne Thompson (nee Kerle - Past Student 1973 - 1984)**  
**Columba Catholic College**  
**PO Box 274 Charters Towers Qld 4820**  
**or email: [jthompson@columba.catholic.edu.au](mailto:jthompson@columba.catholic.edu.au)**

Likewise, if you have the opportunity to visit Charters Towers, please call in and visit the College - you will see many changes!



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# PAST STUDENT GATHERINGS 2013

## BRISBANE JULY 2013



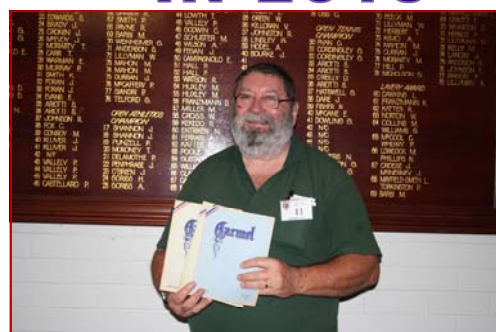
## CLASS OF 2003 OCTOBER 2013



## CLASS OF '93 OCTOBER 2013



## CAUGHT ON CAMPUS IN 2013



Owen Schmidt (Past Teacher - Mt. Carmel) visited the College in October and especially enjoyed catching up with other Past Students on Staff—Megan Lucas (1978-1982) and Dan Kyle (1980-1984)

Mick Nicholls (1963-1964) visited the College earlier this year.

Matt Bennetto (1998-2002) and his wife, Sonia, visited the College in 2013. Sonia was at Columba for Relief teaching. Matt took the opportunity to catch up with other Past Students on Staff, Tonya Burgoine (1978-1986) and Andrew Butler (1978-1979)



## FOCUS ON CALLAN SOLARI (2003-2007)

After graduating from Columba Catholic College in 2007, Callan gained entry to the Bachelor of Veterinary Science course at James Cook University in Townsville. The course at JCU really appealed to Callan with its focus on rural veterinary practice. After 5 long years of study, Callan graduated in December, 2012. He was fortunate enough to be awarded 5th year Dux of Veterinary Science, receiving a JCU academic medal, as well as the award for cattle medicine. Earlier this year, Callan was recognised as the Don Kerr Award recipient at the Australian Veterinary Association annual Conference. The Don Kerr Award is awarded to one final year veterinary student in Australia. It recognises academic achievement and exceptional commitment to cattle medicine.

Callan is currently working as a veterinarian at Tropical Vet Services. The practice owns 3 clinics, based in Ingham, Tully and Innisfail. They also operate 3 satellite clinics at Cardwell, Mission Beach and Babinda, which are open one or two days a week. Callan is based in the Tully clinic, however he does work at all clinics from time to time. Callan says he is very happy with Tropical Vets as his first job – as mixed rural practice gives him the experience in all fields of veterinary science – from geese and crocodiles to horses and dogs. Callan is very interested in the large animal side of things, particularly cattle medicine and reproduction. He hopes to further his skills as a well-rounded mixed-practice vet before focusing on cattle medicine and reproduction in the Northern beef industry.

While at university, Callan was able to maintain a small Brahman stud herd. He has approximately 50 breeders and is starting to utilise artificial breeding programs (artificial insemination, embryo transfer and IVF) to improve his cattle.



Callan performing a rumenotomy surgery on a cow earlier this year.



From our College Archives - photo taken in 2007 - Callan (Year 12 Ag. Vet. Student and College Captain) pictured with Mr Dan Kyle preparing for the Ag/Vet Centre's Artificial Insemination Program.

## Just Married



Holly Clarke (2002-2006) married Neil Hammond in April 2013. The Bridal Party consisted of Past Students, Megan Kernan (Columba 2002-2006), Bridget Clarke (2008-2012), Hannah Clarke (2005-2009), Aaron Clarke (2000-2004), and Luke Murray (2000-2004)



Past Students from 1979-1980 got together in April 2013 in Ipswich and the theme for the night was 'Black & White'. Past students in the photo were '79-'80 students—Gordon Reeves, John O'Donnell, Ann-Maree Hando, Pamla Betzel and Past Student John O'Donnell's wife - Wendy and wife of absent classmate Michael Fitzhenry, Robyn.

## Where are they now?

- Margaret Smith (1970 - 1974) emailed the College earlier this year. Margaret is currently living in Brisbane and looks forward to receiving the Columba Catholic College Past Students' Newsletter each year. In Margaret's words "I wait its arrival so I can catch up on what's been happening at the best school ever!!!"
- Ken Vovoki emailed the College in January. Since graduating in 1999, Ken took up Art & Design as a major area of study and Theatre Arts as a minor at the University of Papua New Guinea for 5 years and graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Art & Design. Since then, Ken has worked with a few design companies in Port Moresby and in September 2008, joined the Port Moresby International School to teach Visual Art. In his email, Ken said he remembers the opportunities he had at CCC to become a better student; a College Prefect and perform on stage during the musical productions saying he really had fun and gained a lot of experience on stage acting and dancing.
- Kerry McEwin (nee Withers 1969-1973) emailed the College recently. Kerry would love to hear from her classmates. Her email address is [kerry.mcewin@deakin.edu.au](mailto:kerry.mcewin@deakin.edu.au)
- Leonie Odegaard (nee Abdul-Rahman) contacted the College recently. Leonie is currently living in Brisbane and would love to hear from past students from her year. Leonie's email address is [leonie.odegaard@hotmail.com](mailto:leonie.odegaard@hotmail.com).
- Jason McGowan (1981-1983) visited the College in September 2013. Jason commented that as an old boy, after 30 years, it was lovely to see how things have changed - and some things that haven't!





Earlier this year, the College received a visit from the family of past student Doug O'Reilly. Doug was a past student in the 1930's. During his time as a past student, Doug won the trophy for the 1935 Ryan Cup Senior handball championship. The family presented the trophy to the College to be kept in the College Archives and enjoyed touring the College with current students and staff.

## IN MEMORIAM IKE AXFORD EULOGY

Ike's eulogy was prepared by Ike's wife Marj and presented at the funeral by Tom Kruger (Past Principal - Mt. Carmel College).

We gather today to remember and celebrate the life of Isaac Frederick Joseph Axford. Ike, as he was better known, was the eldest child of Isaac Thomas and Evaline May Axford (nee Ford). He was born on 14 August 1934 in Charters Towers.

On April 13, 1957, Ike married Marjorie Cairns and they raised a family of four: Debbie, Suzanne, Julie and Ikey.

It was in the area surrounding Charters Towers that Ike was reared, attended school and was involved in various sporting activities - either playing, or coaching or training - be it football, swimming, or horse racing. He enjoyed the challenge, mateship and success of sport. He had a prized possession - a 4 inch cup - that was given to him when he swam before the Queen at the Tobruk Pool. It must have been the visit of the present Queen to Townsville in 1954. He sometimes told the story with a laugh, but he never skited about it because he was never one to skite - he didn't look back; his eyes were always on the future and future possibilities.

He went off to boarding school at an early age - I am told it was as a 6 year old that he was off to All Souls, and then, after the war, he continued his education at Mount Carmel. After that it was back to life on the land.

The Axford family owned, at one time or another, and sometimes owned the same block twice, many blocks of land: First was Southern Cross and Marlow, before purchasing Eumara Springs where a member of the Axford family lived for the next 74 years. Then there was Talavera, Blunder Park, Mt Gregory, Disney, Crocodile, Southernview and currently Farleigh - all bought and sold as part of the journey that was Ike's life. For all of his adult life, Ike conducted a business, either in or around the Charters Towers area.

Ike spent most of his life in the rural industry, rearing livestock and farming. He enjoyed and felt pride with his livestock. However, farming was his passion and he was proud of the success he achieved at the Brisbane show with Lucerne that he had grown.

Ike was generous to a fault. It is great to see representation from Columba Catholic College here because he did a lot for that school. When it was Mt Carmel the school got a grant under the R.E.D. scheme for infrastructure to bring back waste water to irrigate the school ovals. Ike was not content with this. He was in his element. He had ideas about making the school's ovals a masterpiece. He brought in his own machinery and bulldozed land and shifted the course of the creek, and organized truckloads and truckloads of soil fill, and graded out new ovals. All of this was voluntary and a donation to the school. It is pleasing that one of the ovals is called Axford Oval.

When he became involved in something, he always gave it his best shot. He took on the Presidency of the Miners - our local football club - because he wanted to see the club go ahead. He worked hard at securing the best facilities for the club and the best players and the best coaches. As it worked out, while Ike was President, the club won 3 grand finals - the U18, Reserve Grade and A Grade. I think it is the only time it has been done, and this year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the achievement. Ike would be so proud to know that his record still stands.

# With Sympathy

**Archibald James (Jim) Macdonald**  
(Past Student 1921 - 1922)

**Ike Axford**  
(Past Student 1946 - 1950)

**Warren Martin**  
(Past Student 1939-1941)

**Garry Francis Crossley**  
(Past student 1968)

**Monica Ascott**  
(Past Staff Member - St. Mary's College)

**Moira Batchelor**  
(Past Staff Member - St. Mary's College)

**Veronica Schmidt**  
(Past Staff Member - St. Mary's College & Mt. Carmel College)

**Ellen Wickham**  
(Past Staff Member - St. Mary's College & Columba Catholic College)

Ike was blessed with a wonderful memory for history, facts and events both past and present. Years afterwards, he could tell you someone's phone number even though he had heard it only once. He had an active and inquiring mind that delighted in a challenge. He could often be found in the office sorting through research material which he had collected over a lifetime. He was always busy with something on his mind. His whole life was an adventure. He was never one to stand still.

I asked Julie what was one strong memory she had of her dad, and she said that whenever he rang the first thing he said always was: "What do you know?" Eventually he would come around to whatever he rang about. I think many of us have had that experience of Ike's phone calls.

Ill health slowed his body over the last several years. However his mind was as active as it had always been, planning new schemes and projects. His last day saw him out in his buggy, his legs as he called it, running an eye over the land, and goodness knows what ideas were brewing. A mind so full of information and ideas that never switched off is now at rest.

If I could sum up Ike in one phrase it would be that he was a big man with a heart as big as himself. I am speaking metaphorically here about his attitude to life. Because it was his heart that gave him a lot of trouble towards the end. The end came suddenly. After a fall he was taken by ambulance to the Charters Towers hospital and then by air to Townsville. Shortly after he passed away quietly, peacefully and with dignity.

Ike is survived by his wife Marj, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Also, by his brother, Ron, and his three nephews: Ron (RJ), Peter and Shane and his Uncle, Alan Ford. The family will honour Ike's request to be cremated and to have his ashes scattered at his chosen location. May his generous and honorable soul rest in the peace of the Lord!



L to R: Past Students - Alan Oss (deceased), Clem Archer, Kevin Phillips (deceased) and Ike Axford (deceased). Photo taken on the Mt. Carmel Grounds.