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Miss L. Shaw

Miss Lucy Shaw is the second headmistress of Morongo. She is the daughter of the Rev. A. D. and Mrs Caroline Shaw, and was born in Brisbane. She was educated at the Girls' Grammar School, Rockhampton, and completed her studies at the University of Queensland from which she graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. At the same time, at the Brisbane Teachers' College, she successfully completed a course extending over the full three years of her University career.

Her first post was at Rockhampton Technical School where she taught for three years and, from there, in 1922, she came to Roslyn as a young assistant mistress. She was made chief of staff in 1923, and this may be regarded as the real beginning of what is an outstanding career in education. In 1927, she was appointed Principal of Clarendon P.L.C., Ballarat, and in 1935, Principal of P.G.C., Glen Osmond, Adelaide, a post she held for seven years before accepting the position as Principal of Morongo P.G.C. in 1942.

These are the facts of a long career in teaching, yet they do not tell everything. A degree does not record that Miss Shaw was an excellent sportswoman. At University she was a member of the 'A' grade Tennis and Hockey teams, and in later life she became a good golfer.

During her five years at Roslyn she aroused much admiration. This ought to be an admiration for the excellence of her teaching, but schoolgirls are more prone to notice dresses and hairstyles, and the girls of 1923 were no exception. An Old Collegian remembers that 'Miss Shaw always wore a gold bangle high on her arm into which she tucked a white handkerchief. We girls thought she was the last word in elegance, and gold bangles were much sought after.'

Miss Shaw herself recalls that in those days, apart from full-time teaching, as a resident mistress she was on duty every second day from 5.50 a.m. until 9 p.m., and every second weekend. She frequently escorted boarders to medical, dental or shopping appointments. Her handwriting appears in the 'Accounts Book' listing provisions and staff wages in 1923, so that one can only presume that teachers in the twenties needed to be both robust and versatile. The years at other schools do not belong to this history, but doubtless their success led to the Council's invitation to her to become Principal of Morongo upon the retirement of Miss Pratt.

Her return to the School in 1942 proved to be a very difficult year. Invasion of Australia from the south-sweeping forces of Japan was a great fear, and, of necessity, preparations were made to evacuate the school should the need arise.

This extract from her report of 1942 shows some of the organization involved.

'The school year opened in February with the threat of invasion a very real one. You will recall that the council took every possible precaution for the safety of the children. Arrangements for evacuation were planned to the last detail.

With the help of council members, the fathers, and, through the Headmaster, the Geelong College Seniors, air raid shelters were provided at both schools. Staff members, boarders and senior girls went to work with a will to sew and fill the two thousand bags needed for the senior school. Each day the school was cleared in readiness for air raids. You will agree that it was not a restful atmosphere in which to settle to the year's work.

You will remember that, in the event of evacuation, the school was to move to 'Warranooke', the beautiful station property of Mr and Mrs Clive Campbell. We fully realized the difficulties and responsibilities attending such an undertaking and looked forward to the possibility with no little anxiety. What seemed to be insurmountable difficulties quietly disappeared when helpful and practical suggestions were so readily offered by our hosts. For the sake of Mr and Mrs Campbell, and for obvious reasons, we hope, though the children have other views, that it will not become necessary to invade 'Warranooke' but we can never be sufficiently grateful to Mr and Mrs Campbell for their generosity.

It is worthy of note that almost all the seniors and many of the juniors were enrolled to accompany the school to Glenorchy. Let me say how much we appreciate the confidence of the parents, thus expressed in the arrangements made by the school authorities. I also gratefully record the fact that Mrs Lawson and Mrs Pyper, both medical women, expressed their willingness to come with the school to supervise the health of the girls.'

The war years were passed, and those years of restrictions in everything, except increasing numbers of pupils, finally ended. In the years from 1946 to 1968, Miss Shaw saw many changes at Morongo. In those years, Morongo was to change from a relatively small school with limited facilities to one whose name and good reputation is widely known in Victoria.

Some idea of the Morongo of today has been given in the previous chapter. A look at the Lucernian reports or the school calendar of events for 1967 shows the widening of extra curricular activity, the improvement of academic standards and the changes in organization that have taken place in Miss Shaw's time as principal of the school. Since 1958, the building programme alone has taken much of her time for discussion, perusal of plans and consideration of furnishing detail. It is most fitting that the recent addition to the school, a senior house for boarders, which was officially opened by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. Rhys. A. Miller, in 1968 should be named 'The Lucy Shaw House' in her honour.

Major changes take place amidst the routine of daily school life, yet few people, except resident members of Staff, know exactly what is the routine of a headmistress of a girls' boarding school. Her day begins at 8 a.m. when she heads her table in the dining room for breakfast. School assembly is at 9 a.m. followed

by the morning's work from 9.30 to 12.30. Dinner is with the girls from 12.40 to 1.20 and the afternoon school session lasts until 3.30 p.m. Tea is at 6 p.m., after which she takes prayers. In school hours, she attends to correspondence, interviews parents, sees members of staff, recruits new staff, deals with finance and a myriad of other tasks from school maintenance to appropriate punishment for schoolgirls' misdemeanours. The average weekday is from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Saturdays, she attends matches played at school and, at night, is often hostess at some school function. On Sunday, she attends church service with the girls in the morning and, for an hour in the afternoon, takes a service. Certainly, it is hard work with relatively little time for relaxation and few hours of complete privacy, but despite the demands of her position as principal of Morongo, Miss Shaw has given much time to other organizations.

During the Royal Visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, she was President of the Victorian Headmistresses' Association and also of the Australian Headmistresses' Association.

At various times, she has been Secretary of the Victorian Girls' Schools Association, Member of the Wages Board, Chairman of Invergowrie Council and Executive Member of the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria. She was made President of the Geelong Appeal for St Hilda's College at Melbourne University, and is on the Council of the Women's College of Melbourne University. She was the Headmistresses' representative to Red Cross for many years, and was invited to be a foundation member of the Australian College of Education.

Locally, she was President of the Geelong Branch of the Victorian Chapter of the Australian College of Education and President of the Soroptimist Club in Geelong, as well as being on many local committees.

This list is impressive in itself but is more so when one realizes that most of these positions are held by invitation, which speaks well of the high regard that so many others have for her qualities of leadership and organization. The school was particularly proud in 1966, when Miss Shaw was invested with the M.B.E. in recognition of her service to Education in Australia.

For many years, the council tried to persuade Miss Shaw to take time off from her duties to make a world tour, and in 1965 she accepted this offer. She sailed on the liner 'Canberra' on the 9th May, which was a Sunday, and so the boarders were able to travel to Point Lonsdale to give her a final wave as the ship went through the Heads. She enjoyed her visits to Europe, Great Britain and Ireland, the U.S.A. and Canada, and though some of her time was spent in visiting schools and attending educational conferences, she was able to meet Old Collegians in several countries. A reunion was held at the Forum Club in June and as the Old Collegians' report says—'it is good to think that reunions of this type can be held anywhere at all and the common interest of each one makes it so easy to chatter and be friendly. . . . So you see the 'old school' has very wide boundaries for such a young school and by the time this goes to print we will be welcoming our 'Head' back to Morongo after what she has described as 'a wonderful experience'.

When Miss Shaw returned to school in November, the whole school lined the drive to welcome her back. It was a moment of considerable sentiment for everyone present and, presumably, a most pleasant memory for Miss Shaw herself.

Miss Shaw is a fortunate woman. Those who know her both like and respect her. Pupils, parents, staff and the school council are well aware of the quality of the work she has done at Morongo and they know that her guidance has led the school to become one of the foremost schools in Victoria today.

Those who would wish this chapter to be a declaration of all that the school owes to her will be disappointed. Expressions of gratitude belong to a later date than this, for Miss Shaw is the present Principal of a progressive school with a task in hand. Her attention is not directed to the past; it is to the Morongo of today and the future, and this is as it should be.