

# The Brigadier

The College's sixth Principal, Dr Martyn Arnold Buntine, did not ever quite measure up to expectations, after the much-loved Mr Rolland. 'Buntine was a brigadier, Rolland was a padre. That sums it up. A lot of people didn't like Buntine. He was a real army man – brusque – he'd say what he thought', explains Fred Elliott.<sup>1</sup> Some say that Dr Buntine was aloof and unconnected to the students and staff; others say that he knew all the boys' names and had a sense of humour. He also had a temper: 'See that the head does not boss you around too much. Go and see him if you want something done. If he yells and screams about it, wait till he has simmered down – attack him again and he will come round like a lamb.'<sup>2</sup>

Dr Buntine did, however, have impressive educational credentials and was highly qualified in ways that Mr Rolland was not. He came from a family of sound educational pedigree: his father had been an outstanding Principal of Caulfield Grammar. In his turn, Dr Buntine had a doctorate in Education from Edinburgh University and the experience of two previous headmasterships. When only 28 years old, he became the Headmaster of Camberwell Grammar School, and then four years later went to Perth to be Headmaster of Hale School, a post he held for fourteen years. Military service was a highly regarded attribute among the College community, and Dr Buntine's war service in the AIF had taken him to northern Australia and North Africa. Dr Buntine also possessed considerable sporting prowess. He had been an outstanding footballer while at the University of Melbourne, as well as an athlete while at Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup>

His period as Principal was marked by a set of traditions that became more dominant as the College grew in size, and as the sons of Mr Rolland's students took their place at the College, already imbued with a deep attachment to the place. It was fortunate that Dr Buntine's basic educational philosophy echoed Mr Rolland's: 'We should strive to cultivate versatility of intellect based upon soundness of character', said Dr Buntine in his first Speech Day address in 1946. He continued: 'It must be our aim to try to teach our boys to apply their knowledge to life, to think for themselves and to distinguish fact from opinion. We must help them to know themselves, to find interest in reflection, to value their own judgements, to cultivate the things of the spirit.'<sup>4</sup> In 1947, Dr Buntine introduced the annual Founders' Day Service, held on 8 July, to emphasise the school's history and traditions and to honour those men whose names



Dr Martyn Arnold Buntine

Students and study interior, 1947. Photo: J.B Waugh Album.



are synonymous with its establishment and survival, the Reverends Campbell and Rolland, and the Morrisons among them. Dr Buntine's period also encompassed the glorious years of cadets in kilts and some great sporting successes, celebrated by increasingly large numbers of day students and boarders as classrooms and boarding houses filled to bursting point.

Part of Dr Buntine's stated educational philosophy was the acquisition of leadership skills through participation in diverse school activities. He deliberately fostered choices to afford every boy some experience in leadership, 'to bring out and encourage their powers of human cooperation'.

If the raw material is there to start with, the qualities demanded of leaders will be developed. By the process of competition which applies to every activity in the school, there emerge at the top boys who possess qualities of intellect and character; and by the education in fellowship and public spirit which runs through every stage of the school life the boys whose characteristics are capable of being expanded into those of a leader receive the highest possible development.<sup>1</sup>

The role played by senior Prefects was fundamental to his position on the development of leaders. The select group of Prefects has always been seen as the elite leadership group of the College, and during Dr Buntine's period averaged ten or eleven in number. Among this group were usually three boys from each boarding house and two day boys, and often the Captains of the Cricket and Football Teams, Senior Cadet Officers, House Prefects and the boy who probably would be the Dux. The predominance of boarders as Prefects further cemented their place at the top of the school hierarchy. All members of Form 6 had always been required to set an example to the rest of the College by their good conduct, but according to Dr Buntine, in the high office held by Prefects, 'qualities of self-reliance and responsibility are given an opportunity for development. It is admirably adapted for the moral education of future leaders and administrators.'<sup>6</sup> This was the rhetoric, but in reality the Principal's methods of inculcating leadership and discipline could also be 'brutish',

according to one Prefect of that era. From his time as a student, Robert Ingpen (1954) recalls that Dr Buntine would test Prefects publicly, by having a senior staff member change the Bible reading – read every morning at Assembly by a Prefect – at the last minute. Although his senior staff members were often given the more difficult disciplinary jobs, Dr Buntine was not averse to administering corporal punishment himself.<sup>7</sup> Geelong Grammar abolished Prefects in 1967 but the College held fast to the office, as have many schools, and continues to appoint Prefects in 2009.



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Dr Buntine with Des Davey. Photo: Des Davey Album



The Cadet Corps on parade, 1957

During the 1950s, Prefects were given additional power. From 1954 they were allowed, and encouraged, to issue detentions. They were expected to enforce quiet, respectable behaviour at daily school Assemblies, and often spread out around the hall to make their presence felt. Prefects could send miscreants to Vice Principal, Des Davey (1958–73), or to Dr Buntine. By the late 1950s, there was considerable concern, even among Prefects, about the 'lack of control' and poor behaviour in the school. Head Prefect Alexander Yule (1958) concluded:

You must be firm, right from the start. Control is lax in the school at the moment, and it is up to future Head Prefects to tighten it up. Do not threaten unless you mean to act. Expect obedience and you are more likely to get it. If you can control the boys right from the first day, you will have a very happy year.

By this period, the Head Prefect was accorded hero status: 'The Senior Prefect stands in the heart of the school. In a sense the school revolves around him. If he is a leader, a strong and likeable person, the school can be a much happier place ... Everything the Senior Prefect does is watched closely. Secretly every boy regards you as a kind of hero, someone to look to when he himself or the school is in trouble.'<sup>9</sup> Old Collegians recall when, as the youngest students in the College, their place every day in Assembly was at the front of the hall and closest to the Prefects.

The Cadet Corps, perhaps more than any other body in the school, was greatly valued for its fostering of discipline, self-discipline and leadership. 'Its training is in discipline, both of body and mind; in the correct and safe handling of firearms; in the rudiments of tactics; in *esprit de corps*; and, above all, in leadership. What better training can there be than that in which boys have authority over their fellows?'<sup>10</sup> There were many opportunities for leadership in the Cadets and, encouraged by their Commanding Officer, Mr Dunkley, another veteran of active

war service, the Cadet Corps at the College grew rapidly during the 1950s to 320 in 1957 – nearly half the school. Mr Dunkley, leader of the cadets for decades, believed like Dr Buntine that the main lesson of participation in the Cadets Corps was to 'learn to become a leader of men, and to find out the inescapable fact that leadership carries no privileges, only extra responsibility'.<sup>11</sup> The Cadet Corps thrived during this period, just as it had under Norman Morrison in the 1890s. The College unit won several interschool competitions, including the Victorian Drill Shield seven years running (1949–55) and the Clowes Cup for shooting in 1956. Cadets looked especially smart from 1949, when the Gordon Highlander tartan kilt was introduced as the new ceremonial dress. Students unequivocally state that participation in the Cadet Corps was by far the strongest activity at the College, apart from sport. Every year, cadets led the annual march of the whole school from the College to St George's on Anzac Day. A highlight of cadet activity was the Queen's visit to Geelong in 1954, when cadets from the College lined part of the royal parade route.

Opportunities for leadership by example also came through the College's branch of the Presbyterian Youth Men's Fellowship, established in 1946 and known always at College as

Mr Dunkley in the classroom. Photo: Stephen Miles Album





Landing on Rodondo Island, 1947

the Presbyterian Fellowship Association (PFA). It was directed by the Reverend McLean and Mr Webb, both teachers at the College who were also very active members of St David's parish. With 114 members by 1952, the PFA led the school in social service activities, as well as providing opportunities for Christian worship and Bible study. Boys helped regularly at the Bethany Babies' Home, and spent hours fixing toys for the children.<sup>12</sup> The Exploration Society, formally established in 1947 as an offshoot of the Ramblers Guild, encouraged leadership in other ways. Fred Elliott (1963–92), who was put in charge of the Exploration Society when he returned to teach at the College in 1963, went on the famous groundbreaking expedition to Rodondo Island in 1947. The first known 'landing' on the island, it attracted considerable media attention, and members of the Exploration Society returned with important specimens of flora and fauna for museum collections. The first trip to Central Australia in 1947 didn't make it to Uluru (known then as Ayers Rock) because of floodwaters, but the next trip in 1948 did, and became renowned as the first trip to Uluru by

a group of school students. Despite a few years of inactivity in the mid-1950s, the Exploration Society was revived by Mr Béchervaise and took a renewed central place in College activities, particularly after the inspirational effects of Mr Béchervaise's and Mr Elliott's involvement in three Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions. Even Dr Buntine went on the epic trip to Central Australia, and Mr Keith was also a regular participant. These journeys were reported at length in *Pegasus* and remembered forever by the participants, all of whom were given special responsibilities during the trip, ranging from cook to botanist.

Leadership through sport was regarded as the greatest pinnacle of achievement, and students who returned for a second Matriculation year were often doing so to be able to participate in the top Rowing, Football or Cricket Team. Some left at the end of Term 1 having rowed in the crew, and others left at the end of Term 2 having played in the Football Team. As Head Prefect, Stewart McArthur wrote in 1957: 'You gain tremendous prestige in the school if you are in any way talented at sport. Give your heart and soul to sport be it cricket, rowing, football or athletics and you will shine.'<sup>15</sup> During the 1950s, aspiring cricket, rowing and football stars were able to share in the accolades attending captaincy of a school team when the number of teams for the main APS sports multiplied. There were often eight or nine teams of rowers, footballers and cricketers who were able to compete at interschool level. Editions of *Pegasus* gave far more room to sport than to any other aspect of school life. After the College won the APS Cricket Premiership in 1947 for the second year running, particularly because of the outstanding batting by Jeff Hallebone (1947) and John Chambers (1948) (both later players in the Victorian Cricket Team), it seemed that anything was possible. Old Collegians on the world sporting stage included cyclist Russell Mockridge (1944) with two Olympic gold medals, runner and Olympian Don Macmillan (1946), Lindsay Hassett (1932), Ian Redpath (1958) and Jack Iverson (1933) in the Australian Cricket Team. Spurred on by such successes,



Premiers of public school cricket, 1947.

Mr Nicholson (first Head of the Preparatory School) was the Coach. Back row: R.A. Leggatt, B.W. Nuttall, G.R. Blake, K.E.C. Officer, G.L. Burch, J.E. Dickson; Seated: J.K.A. McLeod, D.C. Neilson, J.L. Chambers (Vice Captain), K.W. Nicolson (Coach) R.A. Bell (Captain) D.A. Wallace-Smith, J. Hallebone

students in the late 1940s and 1950s strived to create a golden era of sport at the College. The Boat Club grew in size: by 1951, there were 112 keen rowers, 200 by 1960. At last, the College again won the coveted Head of the River in 1955 and then backed this up with further wins in 1956, 1957, 1959 and 1960, in large part because of the expert coaching provided by Albert Bell (1945–72).

The indefinable yet supremely important notion of school spirit became synonymous with this one major annual rowing event. Knowing the Boat Race Song and war-cry was compulsory and learning it was enforced by senior students. High-spirited, loudly sung pride sometimes developed into more rowdy, disruptive behaviour in Geelong at boat race time, ranging from the throwing of flour bombs and firecrackers to the staging of loud, verbally abusive displays in the middle of the night after the race.<sup>14</sup> Although this did little for the College's public reputation, it was not stopped until the late 1970s. For students such as Stewart McArthur, however, his positive experiences of the College are deeply defined by participating in two Head of the River winning crews as stroke. It was regarded 'as quite a big feat' and became part of his life after school, too, when he rowed at university. For students of this era, participation

Winning the Head of the River, 1956





in the Boat Club meant coming under Mr Bell's wonderful spell. He was 'the doyen of rowing coaches, but he also had an ethical approach. The boat club became an enclave of dedication, hard work, courage, determination, and good sportsmanship. I've lived with that influence all my life', as have generations of students who were coached by Mr Bell.<sup>15</sup> Former College rowers still meet at reunions as members of the Albert Bell Club, formed in 1975.

It seems odd that Dr Buntine, with his considerable academic training and background as a Principal, does not appear to have been focused on the academic performance of the College. It was by no means disgraceful: the 1954 Matriculation pass rate was 79 per cent, compared with a state pass rate of 58 per cent; nevertheless, apart from the cohorts of 1956, 1957 and 1958, Matriculation passes and the number of Honours fell considerably during his period. Despite this, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics remained strong, and Matriculation students excelled in these subjects above all others. 'Tam' Henderson, the Chemistry and Physics Teacher for thirty-five years, was mainly responsible for these results and for influencing students' subsequent career choices in the sciences. Several College boys won the Exhibition in Chemistry during the 1940s: among them Donald McLean, later an eminent microbiologist, and Kenneth McLean who would become a Professor of Medicine. Several other students, all of whom had been taught Chemistry and Physics by Mr Henderson, became professors in university science faculties or pursued successful medical careers. The College has maintained strong results in Mathematics and the sciences ever since, and continued to produce outstanding graduates who chose Science or Medicine as a career.

Many students and their parents, however, did not aspire to academic outcomes higher than an Intermediate Certificate or, at most, a Leaving Certificate. There was little academic pressure during Dr Buntine's era. Stewart McArthur explains this attitude:

There was a very strong tendency for boys from the country, for example the Western District, to go home and do the shearing and not worry about their academic work. Academic endeavour was not a goal in itself; going home to run the farm was an acceptable objective and we were at College to row in the Head of the River, play in the first eighteen, be a good runner, and get away from home for a while. School work was something that had to be tolerated.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this, enrolments remained high and waiting lists developed as the College began to trade on its reputation and status derived from its APS membership.

An ageing staff, many wearied by the war, perhaps had little energy to counter low parental expectations. Several teachers who had held the College together during the war years put off retirement during the teacher shortages of the late 1940s and 1950s, and were not in their prime. Carl Ipsen (1931–55) had taught English and Latin for twenty-five years and also acted as Librarian, Athletics Organiser and indefatigable Housemaster of the senior boarding house. He was a stickler for rules, but also for loyalty to the school, and died only a few months after he left the College.

There were several capable teachers who left or retired in the 1950s. Alan Tait, Old Collegian and Vice Principal from 1939, retired in 1957. He had taught at the College earlier (1921–30) and after spending the 1930s as Headmaster of Scots College in Warwick, brought his love of learning back to The Geelong College. Mr Logie-Smith was lost to Scotch College at the end of 1958, so bringing the first exuberant period of music-making at College to an end. Gilbert and Sullivan productions went with him, but before he left, he introduced House music in 1950 and organised the first Music Tour to Tasmania in 1951.



Albert Bell, 1959

## Matriculation passes, 1946–60

Year	Matriculation passes	Subjects with Honours
1946	26	43
1947	23	41
1948	11	13
1949	18	17
1950	15	8
1951	18	16
1952	21	28
1953	22	24
1954	27	26
1955	28	28
1956	32	44
1957	39	48
1958	31	28
1959	21	23
1960	17	22

Source: *Pegasus*

Dr Buntine wanted to attract and keep good teachers, which was difficult during this period when teachers were in short supply. He convinced the College Council in 1947 that the school should set its own salary scale, commensurate with the new state school scale, and that annual increases at the lower end of the scale should be automatic to 'enable young teachers to look ahead and see what can be expected'.<sup>17</sup> More state school salary increases during 1948 meant a further increase for College teachers in 1949, but as state salaries continued to rise, independent school salaries could not keep pace, despite repeated fee increases. In 1950, nineteen members of the College staff wrote a letter to Council about the issue and it was agreed that all staff – not just teachers – should have parity with their government counterparts. College went one step further in 1954, in a desperate bid to retain good teachers, and provided a margin of £50 above state school salaries. Other improved conditions included the introduction of superannuation in 1949 and, from 1951, long-service leave of six months for every twenty years of service.<sup>18</sup>

One of the factors that contributed greatly to declining academic standards was that the College was bursting with students throughout the 1950s, a situation experienced by many Victorian independent schools at that time. The capacity of 600 students was reached in 1951 and huge waiting lists developed. By 1953, at least a hundred new boarders were refused admission every year because there was simply no space.<sup>19</sup> Dr Buntine and the Head of the Junior School, L.J. Campbell, expressed frustration and embarrassment when, year after year, they had to turn away new enrolments. Although land had been purchased and set aside for the development of a new Preparatory School by 1946, the College Council's fiscal conservatism was not the only factor to be overcome. This was the era of post-war building shortages of labour and materials, and a time of great societal change and upheaval: many women remained in the workforce after the war but could not fill the need demanded now by rapid economic development. Migration and the post-war baby boom caused rapid population growth, which put a great strain on the education system. State secondary schools, many of which were built in response to this need, were not ready overnight, and when they were, they worsened the teacher shortage that had begun during World War II. A new Preparatory School would be built eventually, opening a few months before Dr Buntine left (see Chapter 7).

Another difficulty for the College in the late 1940s and 1950s was the strengthening of competition from Geelong Grammar. A second Preparatory School, Glamorgan, was opened in Toorak in 1947 in an astute move that cleverly catered for the enrolment boom. The opening of Timbertop in 1953 was designed to take the pressure off the overcrowded Corio campus, but later became famous around the world as a site providing sound educational experience for boys when Charles, Prince of Wales, attended school there in 1966. This cemented Geelong Grammar's identity as a school for wealthy and socially elite families, and widened the social gap between its clientele and those who chose the College.

The size of the College and the overemphasis on traditions such as initiation ceremonies began to cause some serious problems by the 1950s. Early in Term 1 of each school year, some fifty questions were advertised as being the subject of the initiation test. New boys had one week to discover and learn the answers, and passing the test was a prerequisite to being recognised as Geelong Collegians and being allowed to wear the school lapel badge and own a school diary. The names of those who passed initiation were announced at Assembly, where they were congratulated by the Head Prefect. Knowledge of the Boat Race Song was compulsory, and terrified 'freshies' (new boys) had to present themselves to a formidable committee of twenty-five senior students and Prefects, and provide oral answers to at least ten

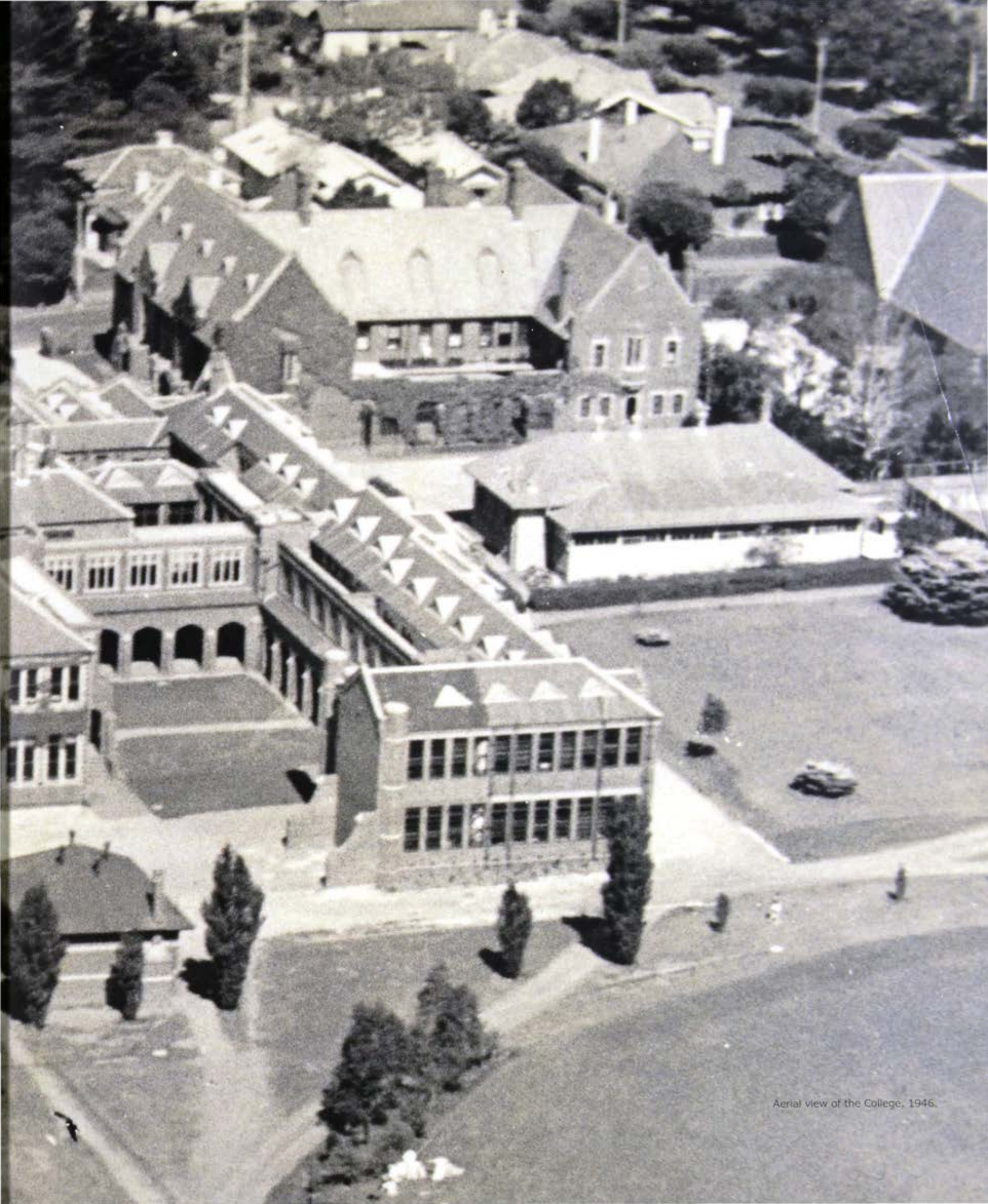


Boys working in the Chemistry laboratory, 1958

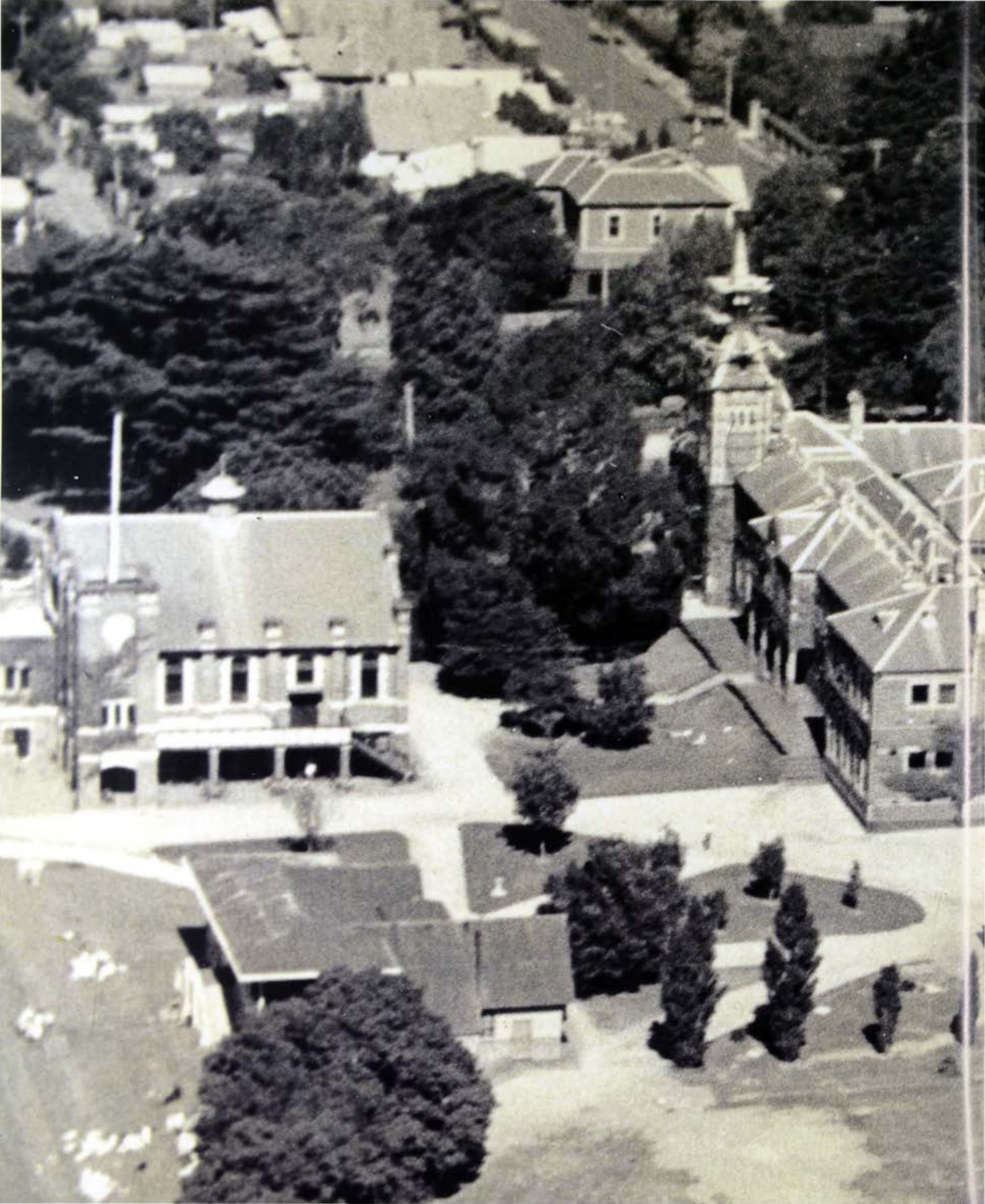
of the questions about the school's history and customs. It was regarded as 'a traditional and necessary function in Public School life', according to the Head Prefect of 1951, and it was sanctioned by the teachers.<sup>20</sup> New boys who failed had to repeat the test, and for many it was a terrifying ordeal which some senior students regarded as a type of 'sport', during which they were further able to assert their position of power in the school by using weapons such as rulers during the initiation.

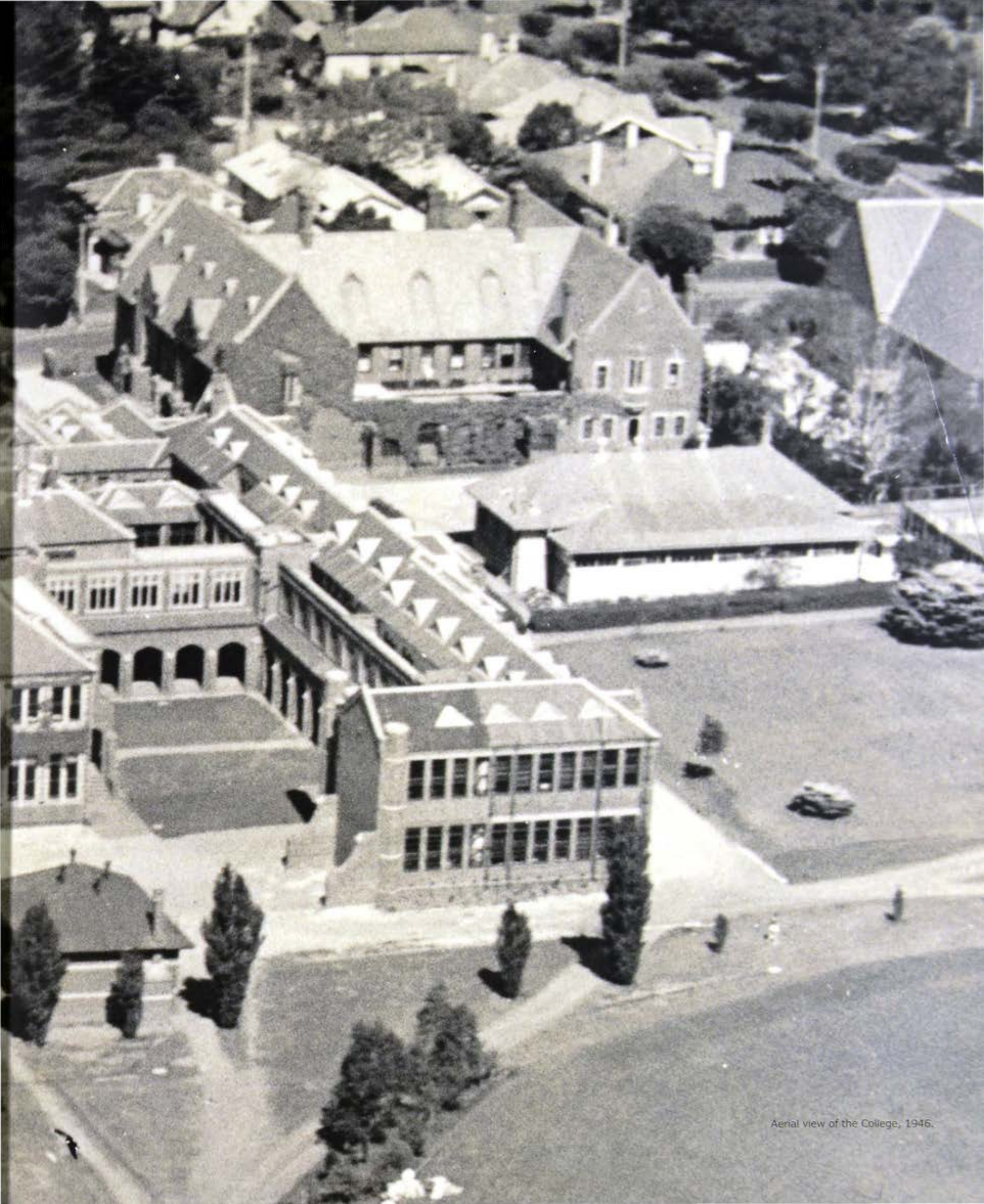
By 1955, only Mr Tait was still in favour of the initiation process, so the format was modified. Physical punishment during the initiation test was banned, the committee was reduced in size and fewer correct answers were required to pass. However, some over-enthusiastic senior students continued to use weapons and other violent tactics, such as 'throwing chairs in the path of the freshies'.<sup>21</sup> Stephen Miles, School Captain in 1962, expressed considerable unease about the ritual, and suggested that in the future some extremely sensitive boys should be exempt to protect



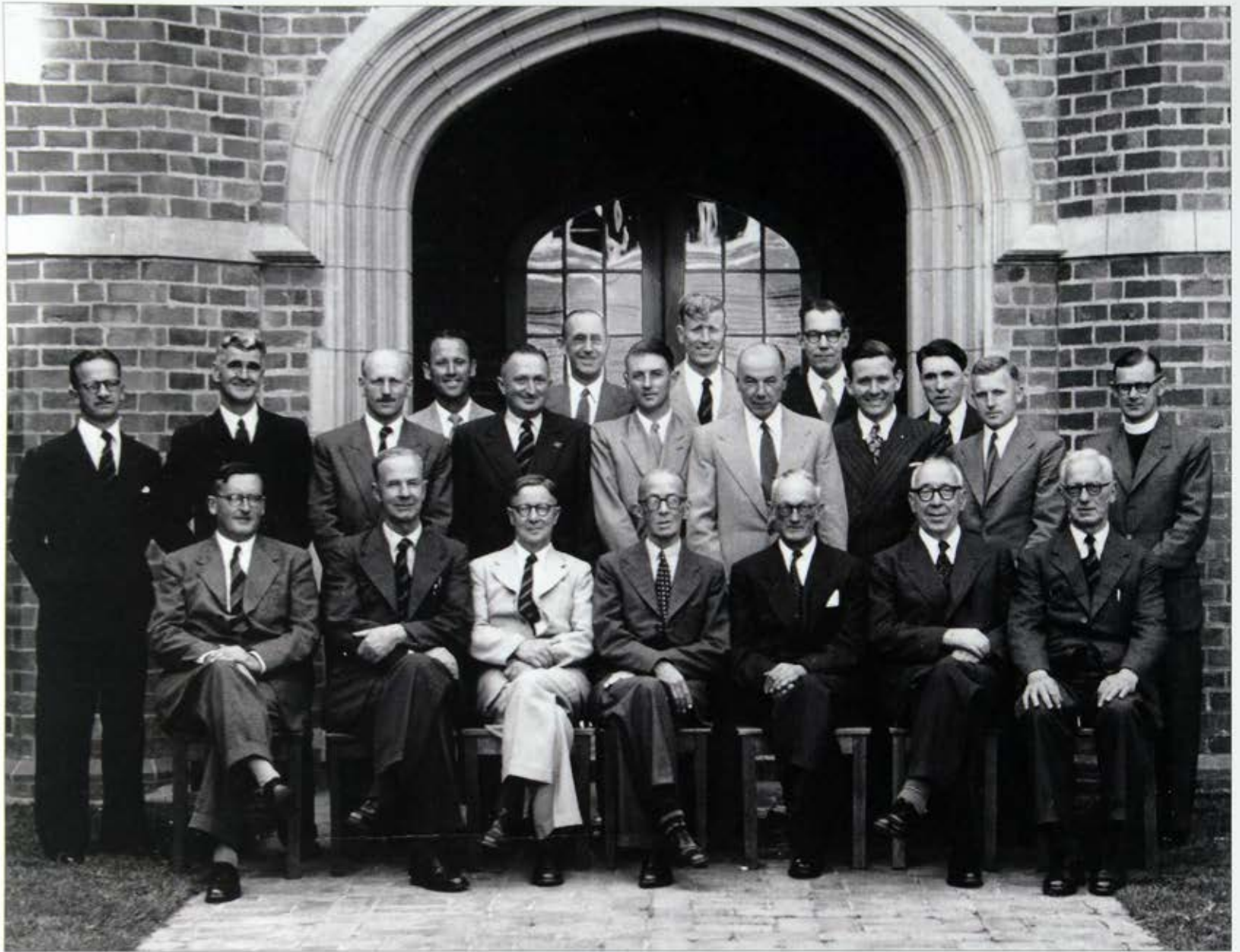


Aerial view of the College, 1946.





Aerial view of the College, 1946.



1955 Academic staff. Several staff served The Geelong College for many years. Back row: E.B. Davies, K.W. Nicolson, D.R.T. Macmillan, D. Webb; Centre row: J.R. Hunter, C.A. Bickford, F.R. Quick, H.L.E. Dunkley, B.R. Wardle, J.A. Carrington, G. Logie-Smith, G.M.L. Quayle, D.G. Sargood, E.C. McLean; Front row: E.B. Lester, B.R. Keith, A.T. Tait, C.F.H. Ipsen, V.H.W. Profitt, T. Henderson, J.H. Campbell

them from potential harm, as he had 'many boys complaining that the prefects were juvenile and sadistic' during the initiation ceremony.<sup>22</sup> The ceremony was gradually modified, becoming a written test by 1964, and later banned in 1974 when Vice Principal Doug Stott (1973–76) decided that he would allow only knowledge of the war-cry and Boat Race Song to be compulsory for new students.

By the end of the 1950s, there was a distinct loss of respect for Dr Buntine, made evident to all at one memorable school Assembly when he was deliberately humiliated by some students.<sup>23</sup> A special meeting of Council was called late in 1958 'because of the increasing number of stories which were being circulated regarding disciplinary actions of the Principal, and the general behaviour of some boys which tended to lower the tone of the College and destroy the authority of the Principal'.<sup>24</sup> Earlier that year,





Dr Buntine had indicated to Council that he would not seek another term and that he would retire before the end of his current appointment in December 1960, if Council wished. Council did wish, and after promising to pay the Principal until the end of his contract, immediately set about finding a new Principal to begin in 1959. Clearly they had someone in mind but when these 'negotiations' fell through, Council resorted to advertising. Peter Thwaites and the Reverend G. ('Pat') Wood – a member of Council from 1950 – were the only candidates interviewed. Early in 1960, it was proposed to extend the search to Great Britain but some on Council convinced their colleagues that the matter of Dr Buntine's replacement was so urgent that it could not be postponed in this way. A vote taken to decide between the Reverend Wood and Mr Thwaites resulted in the immediate appointment of the latter.<sup>25</sup>

The open quadrangle before the War Memorial Wing was constructed in 1950



THE GEELONG COLLEGE  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL