

Maleny State School Centenary a time to reminisce

I think that I can remember the first verse of an old song that went something like this:-

*“School days, school days,
dear old “golden rule” days,
readin’ and ‘ritin and ‘rithmetic,
taught to the tune of a hickory stick.”*

In our case it wasn't a hickory stick but the ubiquitous lawyer cane which was the “instrument of choice” by head teachers for discipline enforcement, while the class teachers were quite adept at using a (one foot) ruler across the knuckles.

I was talking to one of my old timer friends recently about people asking us, “Did you know so and so?” They would be surprised when we said no, after all Maleny's not such a big place. But looking back, a lot of us grew up on farms and we didn't travel much, we knew our neighbours, indeed, had a fair bit to do with them as farmers were constantly helping each other with farm projects that were too much for one person. I grew up during World War Two, petrol rationing was part of our life, and as well as vehicles, fuel was also needed for farm machinery especially until electricity was introduced. I say this to help understand why my first few days at school were quite traumatic. Farm life wasn't necessarily idyllic, there was parental discipline, the regular milking of the cows and feeding of the calves, pigs and chooks but there was the feeling of a comfort zone about it.

School was different, all these other people in one place at the one time. Adults that I didn't know were “running the show.” Farm life had a regularity about it, but school had strict regimentation. However after a few days I succumbed to the system and settled in.

Part of that regimentation was the morning parade; all were lined up on the parade ground in our classes with our teacher, announcements or a lecture by the head master was delivered. We would then be called to attention, a student would break (unfurl) the flag at the top of the flagpole and an oath of allegiance would be recited. Then class by class we marched to march music played over loud speakers to our various rooms silently singing the various parodies that we knew! The loud speaker system was also used to tune into the ABC school programmes produced for various class years. “The world we live in,” by H D Black was one that I recall.

What else do I remember? Those slates and slate pencils, having to take wet and dry rags every day to clean our slates; copy books and pencils, ink wells in the desks with those pens and replaceable nibs. We (the boys) learnt that by placing pressure on the nib at a certain place, the points would break off leaving two sharper points, then different pressure on the nib shaft and it would crack sufficient to insert a paper tail and you then had a nifty little dart, the wooden ceilings were a tempting target! Then the big invention as far as writing was concerned was the Biro. That may have been the catalyst for (thankfully) confining the slate and slate pencil to history, certainly the pen and ink well went from schools and fountain pens aren't the accoutrements in coat pockets or hand bags that they once were.

Shoes were seldom worn by girls or boys regardless of hot, cold, wet or dry weather. During the war slit trenches were dug under the rows of Camphor Laurel trees in the school yard. The school had its own hand siren and the butter factory had an electric one for the town. Air raid practice was carried out regularly. Students either walked, rode bikes or horses to and from school, yes the schools had horse paddocks. I could ride a

horse long before I could ride a bike. Discipline was strict and if you were game to mention the punishment you had received, sympathy wasn't forthcoming at home.

When the decision was made to close down the smaller adjacent schools and introduce school busses the first busses were the cream lorries. Planks were placed across the back for seating, children picked and taken to school, the planks were then stacked up at the front and the driver went about picking up the cream etc.

I can't say that I enjoyed school – rather I endured it. Was it beneficial? – Yes! Was the strict regimentation necessary? – Yes! Did I cover myself with glory? – No. But as one Robert Maynard Hutchins has said, "The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives." I am sure that the Maleny State School did that for me.



Stanley James Collard is an Australian retired politician. Born at Maleny, Queensland, he was a locomotive engine driver before entering politics. In 1975, he was elected to the Australian Senate as a Country Party Senator for Queensland. He remained in the Senate until his retirement in 1987. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: 25 March 1936 (age 86 years), [Maleny](#)

Previous office: Senator of Australia (1975–1987)

Party: [National Party of Australia](#)