

Rostrevor's Heritage - Rostrevor, A Boarding School

The primary reason for the establishment of Rostrevor College in May 1923 was to transfer the boarders from crowded and unsuitable conditions at C.B.C. Wakefield Street.

After a long-drawn-out battle with the authorities, led by Brother Gabriel Purton, Rostrevor Estate, the magnificent property in the foothills, was purchased. Classes commenced on 29th May 1923, much work having been done to prepare buildings and grounds in the months beforehand. Rostrevor was not then seen as a new school, but as the boarding campus of C.B.C. For some fifteen years

Rostrevor and C.B.C. Wakefield Street came under the banner of "Christian Brothers' College". For the seventy or so boarders it was a wonderful move. No longer the noisy traffic of the city but instead the sounds of the abundant bird life of the foothills. A large bungalow was hurriedly built in a corner of what became known as the 'Bungalow Oval' and this housed about thirty senior boarders. The remainder were accommodated upstairs in Rostrevor House, distributed around five large bedrooms, the upper landing and the northern balcony. There were three small

bathrooms, shared with the Brothers. It was crowded and far from ideal but to the boarders it was heaven itself.

The situation remained much the same for the next eighteen years, except that a fine Junior Dormitory was added in 1935 by the clever erection of a second storey over the old coach house, which had been converted to a classroom and shower block. The number of boarders fluctuated, dropping to a mere thirty-three at the height of the Depression in the early 1930's. But the outbreak of World War Two brought an increased demand for boarding and in 1941 a

large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. On each floor was a traditional large room containing forty beds, with ten more on the balcony, a locker room and rooms for the supervising Brothers. The situation remained the same for the next eighteen years, although the old chapel was converted to a temporary dormitory when boarding numbers grew in Brother Mogg's time in the early 1950's to a record 215. A great step forward in the provision of suitable boarding accommodation



The northern balcony of Rostrevor House (Summer)



The northern balcony of Rostrevor House (Winter)



A large bungalow was hurriedly built in a corner of what became known as the 'Bungalow Oval'



Boarding accommodation was distributed around five large bedrooms in Rostrevor House. This is the Junior Dormitory in 1923.



Boarding accommodation was distributed around five large bedrooms in Rostrevor House. This is the upstairs landing in the late 1930s



Boarding accommodation was distributed around five large bedrooms in Rostrevor House. The Small Boys Dormitory, 1923

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A fine Junior Dormitory was added in 1935.



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House.



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. The Intermediate Dormitory



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. The upstairs verandah.



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. The upstairs ablutions area



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. The upstairs Senior Dormitory



In 1941 a large two-storeyed dormitory block was erected on the northern side of Rostrevor House. The northern exterior of the new Dormitory



Brother JL Kelty oversaw the construction of the Edmund Rice Wing in the early 1960's.



The demolition of the Bungalow in 1961

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happened in the early 1960's with the erection by Brother JL Kelty of the fine Edmund Rice Wing, which included two large well designed dormitories for Years Eight, Nine and Ten. Years Eleven and Twelve filled the existing boarding house and the Juniors were already well looked after. The Bungalow was vacated and soon demolished. Boarding facilities were now acceptable. The drastic decision by the Provincial Council based in Perth in the late 1970's to close the boarding school at Rostrevor because of the shortage of Brothers came as a great

shock to everybody. For many years Rostrevor had been seen by most people as primarily a boarding school, with many and close contacts with families from all over the State and from nearby cities such as Broken Hill and Darwin. It was a very sad day for all concerned when the last boarders left at the end of 1983. With the closing of the boarding school came the retirement of Matron Duggan, who had played such a major part in the life of Rostrevor for thirty-five years. Fortunately a new dawn came five years later when Rostrevor received

permission to admit boarders once again. A magnificent modern boarding house was erected on the old tennis courts site. Duggan House, as it was appropriately named, provided excellent accommodation for eighty boarders and live-in staff, ensuring that once again Rostrevor was complete.

In 2008, with the advent of the Rostrevor Indigenous Sports Academy, Federal funding became available for additional beds to be added to Duggan House. Through the astute work of Mr Vince Fleming, Learning Community

Coordinator, the grant application was duly accepted and Rostrevor proceeded with the completion of a \$500,000 extension of Duggan House. The new extension increased the capacity of Duggan House to 100 beds.

The opening of the new section is planned to coincide with the return of the ROCA boarders function, The Boarders' and Scraggs' Banquet on Friday 6 November. See advertisements in this edition for more detail.



The Year 8 Dormitory in the Rice Wing 1961



Archbishop Beovich blesses the new dormitories in 1961



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The site for the new Duggan House extension, August 2008.



The new extension increased the capacity of Duggan House to 100 beds.



The completed new section of Duggan House, June 2009.