

## State High - 1960s

"It may have been the Swinging Sixties BUT there was definitely no swinging allowed at good old State High! No way - Dotty was well and truly still in charge and boys and girls were not allowed to mix at all - not even to speak. The rule applied even to one's family and although I had brothers at the school, I was still rebuked for talking to them. Well - at least that's what I claimed - that I was simply speaking with my brothers!



The Great Hall (B Block)

We girls even had to have a GIRLS ONLY Assembly in the hall - every Thursday lunch hour, which began with the singing of the National Anthem, followed by the singing of the School Song. I might add that the boys never had to endure such assemblies - a fact which delighted them - and many of them would be on the verandahs outside the Great Hall (now known as B block) peering in and enjoying our discomfort. The segregation also applied very much to the younger members of the teaching staff - and in the main, men teachers taught the boys while the women teachers taught the girls.

The 60s was to be a time of expansion and building. The Queensland Government abolished the Scholarship Exam - which had been compulsory for all Year 8s to sit in their final year at Primary School. In 1964, Years 7 and 8 went off to high school together when Year 8 was officially moved across into the secondary sector.

So in 1964, BSHS enrolment went to over 2000 for the first time - and the campus of the early 60s was quite inadequate, as the only buildings were the Red Brick Building and the old D Block that was demolished last year.



South Brisbane Intermediate School  
(H Block)

To cope with the influx of students, the South Brisbane Intermediate School was closed and the school and its grounds became the 'bottom school' for BSHS. However, in the 60s the bottom school consisted of only H Block, and some wooden buildings that have been demolished, and later, 'demountables' where P Block now stands. K, L and M Blocks were not part of BSHS - they were still offices and factories.

Throughout the 60s there was a huge building program - first C Block was built, the oval was rebuilt with the current better block retaining wall, the Great Hall (B Block), and then the top canteen was built. Musgrave Park Pool was also constructed in the 60s. There was no

Fursden Road then - but the limit of the school buildings on the top campus was the canteen - the rest of the site was parkland.

One of the talented young Maths teachers at BSHS at that time, Mr Barry Maher, used to joke that his students had kept detailed accounts of the construction of the top school tuckshop - and they calculated that there had been only three bricks laid per day at one stage. So some things don't change at all - the pace of construction on the top campus for example!

We had some interesting nicknames for our teachers in those days - but I have to admit that many of the names came down to us from the students of previous years. In the Administration, we had George, Dot and Cyril. Other well-known teachers of that time were Spike, Pud, Millie, Parrot, Jamie, Nino, Hoppy and Ol Ma.

Academic subjects only were offered in the curriculum - a reminder of the days when BSHS was the original 'academic quarter' of the four schools set up in the city. During the 60s, the other three schools which had been operating (Industrial Boys' High, Commercial High and Domestic Girls' High) all closed. Although Manual Training and Domestic Science were offered at the old Intermediate School on the bottom campus - this was for Year 8 students only. Latin was compulsory for all Junior school students till the mid 60s and the other compulsory subjects were Maths A, Maths B, Physics, Chemistry, English. The only electives in that decade were the Social Sciences, Modern Languages, Art and Technical Drawing. Students had to study eight subjects for Junior and six for Senior.

In the mid 60s a dashing young teacher with pitch black hair, who, I seem to remember, liked fast cars, arrived to teach at the school - you all know him as Mr Simpson. Then, the end of the 60s saw the arrival of the tall young Mr Sole - and he 'broke the mould', when George asked him to teach a Senior Girls' Physics Class. Only a few teachers drove cars in the 60s - many came to work on the trams as the tram line went along Vulture Street and up Gladstone Road - making the Red Brick Building incredibly noisy as there were no double windows - in fact the windows were usually wide open.

Unfortunately, Pockets were not awarded for Academic or Cultural success - only for sports. At that time, there were no music or drama subjects in the curriculum - although Year 8s did have a class music lesson once a week. A very talented music teacher by the name of Mr Ian McKinlay arrived at the school in the 60s and totally revitalised the school orchestra. With the help of Mr John Curro (a well known Brisbane musician), they encouraged musicians in schools to 'combine' - and formed the first Queensland Youth Orchestra (there are now six Youth Orchestras operating). They also began the Festival of Music for Secondary Schools - something which continues today.

Although there was no music in the curriculum - the school presented musicals every year. Ian McKinlay, together with a young teacher of German (Mr Barry Brebner), wrote an original musical comedy - based on BSHS (St George's School in the show) which contained many passing references to the characters in the school then - and it was extremely well received in the community. Other musicals of that decade included 'The King and I', 'Calamity Jane' and numerous Gilbert & Sullivan productions.

We had a student fundraising committee in the 60s to help to pay off the hall and one of the activities was to have 'rock concerts' in the hall in the lunch hours. At one stage, when we were auditioning student bands for this venture, some staff members let us know that one of the songs being rehearsed was unsuitable. It was Helen Reddy's 'I am Woman' - which of course went on to be the unofficial 'anthem' of feminism. But at BSHS, we were expected to be 'young ladies' and it was deemed as 'unseemly' for young ladies to be singing lyrics such as "I am woman, hear me roar". A song extolling the virtues of strong women was frowned upon. Remember that at this time, we girl students had to wear black stockings (definitely not long socks), hat and gloves every day - and a blazer was compulsory in the winter. We even had three different compulsory hats - white panama for summer, blue velour for winter and a beret for rainy days.

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BRISBANE  
STATE  
HIGH  
SCHOOL



As the 60s drew to a close and the trams were phased out of Brisbane, BSHS appeared far different from the school it had been 10 years previously. The once compulsory Latin had disappeared, and the name of the South Brisbane Intermediate School had almost been forgotten, whilst the bottom campus was fast gaining the nickname of 'The Farm'. Although the Red Brick Building stairways that opened onto the upper quad were still designated 'boys' and 'girls', the huge expansion program that began (almost in a frenzy) early in the decade, was all set to continue, behind and beyond the top school canteen and further into the parklands."

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