

## St. James School 1951-57

The school consisted of 1 main building which was partly 2 storey. In the back room of the ground floor the first 2 grades were taught by a young teacher Miss Lavender and the main hall where the rest of the school (grades 3-7) were taught by Miss O'Boone.

At the Falcon Avenue end of the building were 2 small rooms, one used as the teachers' office and library and the other as a classroom where Father Whitfield taught us Religious Instruction. This included learning our Catechism and lessons about past martyrs.

The floor above was never used and something of a mystery until we were told to go up the steps on the outside of the building one day and we used this area as our classroom for several weeks while the hall downstairs was renovated and painted.

The unpaved yard behind the church (a small area – now the paved church carpark) was considered the boys' yard and the paved area between the church and hall (the site of the current Rectory/Manse) was used by most of the students. For some years hoops were very popular and they replaced skipping ropes and other games (e.g. Red Rover All Over).

There were not many students. In 1957 there were 6 girls in grade 7, 3 or 4 students in grade 5 and maybe 10 in grade 4.

We started every day singing a hymn and a prayer. At lunchtime a bell was rung and we prayed "Hail Mary". I think there was a further prayer in the afternoon before we left school. Every Wednesday we all went to Mass in the church. The girls had to wear their school hats or a veil that was kept in the church porch. The older students sat with a smaller student on either side of them and only small whispers were allowed the whole service. The boys served as altar servers ringing bells and swinging the incense. Maundy Thursday we took turns keeping Vigil at the side altar for a short period of time. It was very reverent.

The most memorable years were 1953-54 when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned and the school put on a reenactment of the Coronation with crepe paper costumes. I suppose the mothers were invited to attend. When the Queen toured South Australia we took part in a display at Wayville Showground with all the other schools in the State. Our schoolyard was painted with yellow lines and circles and every Friday afternoon, for weeks, students from other Church of England private schools came to practice with us. I took part in the Wattle Dance with a yellow costume.

In 1957 Father Whitfield retired and moved from the Manse (which was then in Falcon Avenue, a little further south and on the other side of the road). The new minister's wife caused much gossip in the school yard because she wore slacks in the church. How times have changed.

Pamela Roberts (nee Gregory).