

## Flashback to... 1981

- Frank Milthorpe received the first ponding for the year – a belated birthday present – on Sunday 1 March
- The possibility of tertiary education fees caused a stir, with the Student Executive calling meetings to discuss the issue
- The Student Association's cigarette licence cost \$10

The TV miniseries *A Town Like Alice* kept RMC students away from the start-of-semester supper on 20 July



A week later, 80 people crammed into the Senior Common Room to watch the Royal Wedding

- The College Ball was held at Canterbury Racecourse – “a great success” according to Paul Barker, Academic Advisor and Yearbook Editor
- There was a spate of thefts involving Julie Wilson's wombat
- Paul Barnett's birthday was celebrated by filling the Master's office with 170 balloons
- David Watts, remembered for his morning cigarette in the shower, left RMC after 5½ years in College
- Macquarie Uni hosted its inaugural 10km Fun Run, with RMC taking the honours in the six-person team event

## RMC Art Prize is here

More than twelve months in the planning, the inaugural RMC Art Prize is here... and it's a great success! Entries came pouring in just before the closing date, and there is strong competition for the \$3,000 prize money on offer. Don't forget, if you missed the initial public viewing at College on Friday 29 August, you can still catch the finalists at Artarmon Galleries during October – see [www.rmc.org.au](http://www.rmc.org.au) for more details.

## Flashback to... 1993

- A Beard Competition was held to raise money for the College Ball, with Joe Schmetzer triumphant after four weeks' growth
- The new Computer Room was set up and ran on a booking system
- DLC guests performed a Bhangra dance at RMC's International Night
- The College Ball was held at the aptly-named Menzies Hotel in Sydney, with the “Nutbush” one of the highlights
- The inter-College Mansfield Debating competition was created, with Scott Berg, Kim Bailey and Kristen Gatenby taking the honours for RMC
- RMC also took out the inter-College sporting trophy – for the first time since 1990 – highlights including a 3-0 victory in men's hockey and an exciting 5-2 win for our softball women
- Perhaps most impressive of all, the Student Association's shop actually made a profit for the first time in many years
- The staff leadership team of Stuart Piggin, Richard Quadrio and Geoff Treloar reigned at RMC for a decade

## Five Years Ago

Michael Lloyd, Luke White and Ben Cronin really got into the spirit of inter-College sport, taking on DLC in lovely little netball skirts. Meanwhile the 2003 men's Rugby team retained the College Cup with a thrilling 0-0 draw. Many thanks to Paul Heagney (RMC 1999-2003) for the photos.



## Did you know???

• Macquarie University was established in 1964, with classes beginning three years later. Robert Menzies College was already in the planning stage, and the University set aside 2½ acres of land for the purpose.

• According to the original prospectus, RMC was conceived as two adjacent colleges – one for men, one for women – “with attractive white walls and orange tiles in Mediterranean style...” Apparently this design “evoked an enthusiastic response” from Sir Robert himself!



• When RMC opened its doors in February 1973 there were only 45 students, two residential blocks and no Dining Room (meals were at DLC until July). Then the builder went into liquidation and the College wasn't completed until June 1974 – which explains why it wasn't officially ‘opened’ by the Governor until 18 months after it started.



The first yearbook was compiled in 1981 – creatively titled *Robert Menzies College 1981*. In 1989 it was renamed *Tunnels Through Time*, but this was deemed too exciting and a few years later the original name returned. These days it is known as *The Echo*, a particularly clever reference to the fortnightly student newsletter, *The Voice*.



• The inaugural College Citizenship Award was presented in 1983 to Frank Milthorpe (see Flashback to... 1981). Frank still returns to College every week as the longest-serving member of Trinity Chapel.

• The head of the Student Association was known as the Chairperson until the mid-1980s, when the far more impressive title of President was brought in. It was another five years until the position of Vice-President was created to replace the Liaison Officer.

• One popular orientation game in the late 1980s involved “killing” opponents by marking their skin with permanent ink. Long pants, long sleeved shirts and even balaclavas became popular mid-summer attire.

• The ‘nudie run’ rule in pool has been around for a long time, but in the early 1990s a similar rule applied if anyone lost a game of ‘500’ by more than 1,100 points.

• Two RMC students turned 21 on the same day in 1995. That's quite unremarkable, except that they were both born on 26 October 1974 – the same day that the Governor Sir Roden Cutler had opened the College.

• Our longest run of sporting triumphs came in the late 1990s, when we took out the annual trophy in four consecutive years. Unfortunately DLC have been winning ever since, but the RMC sports machine of 2008 looks like turning that around...

• When founding Master Dr Alan Cole died in 2003, RMC had only known three Masters in its first thirty years, demonstrating remarkable stability of leadership. Five years previously, on 16 May 1998, all three had spoken at a special commemorative dinner to celebrate the College's 25th anniversary.

• When Pam Edwards retired last year she had worked in the RMC kitchen for 27 consecutive years, having served more than a million meals to almost 3,000 different students!

## Can You Help???

• We have a complete collection of RMC yearbook magazines except for 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1992. If you have one from these ‘missing’ years, we'd love to copy it for our archives.

• We have very few photos from the pre-digital age. If you have identifiable photos, slides or negatives from your time at RMC that you would be happy to make available, please let us know.

• We love to keep in touch with our alumni, but unfortunately we have lost track of many former members. If you are in contact with friends from RMC, please ask them if they already receive RMC Now... If not, maybe they would like to be included? Either let us know how to contact them, or send them a link to the Alumni & Friends section of our website. Thank you for your help!



SPRING 2008

ISSUE 07

# RMC NOW

Retro Edition - Highlights Since 1973



## IN THIS ISSUE...

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30 years ago  
5 years ago  
Did you know  
and more...

## From the Master

### Dear RMC Alumni and Friends

Do you remember the protests against the Vietnam War and the Fall of Saigon in 1975? Maybe Charles and Diana's fairytale wedding, or playing Pac-Man for the first time, or hearing the news about men dying from AIDS – all events of 1981. But if you were too young then, you may still remember the euphoria of the crowds tearing down the infamous Berlin Wall in 1989, or the excitement five years later as millions of black South Africans voted for the first time.

Young men and women have been living and studying at Robert Menzies College throughout all those years, and this ‘retro’ issue of RMC Now celebrates those times. We, the current generation of RMCers, join together to say ‘thank you’ to those who have gone ahead of us – for the heritage you have left behind in the form of memories, customs, buildings and above all, community. And we thank God for many blessings over the years.

Special thanks to those people who contributed to the 2008 Annual Bursary Appeal. You contributed more than \$11,000 which should enable us to award an additional small scholarship starting next year. The main social event of the year for our alumni and friends, the RMC Association Dinner, is coming up on Friday 31 October. Invitations will be sent separately but please mark this date in your diary now and plan to come with some friends.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in Robert Menzies College. If you know of former RMC members who do not receive RMC Now please help us to get in touch with them. And if there is someone you would like to contact, we will try to assist you. I hope that you enjoy this special issue!

Chris Bellenger  
Master

//FORMING THE PERSON,  
TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



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# COMMUNITY LIFE@RMC

Touch Football provided our most successful day in recent sporting history, with both RMC teams dominating their opponents and quite literally running away with the honours.



International Night was another wonderful occasion full of colour, culture and culinary delights. Colombian compere Catalina captivated the audience, Malaysia took out the annual 'Chef RMC' trophy, while the Islander Dance reminded us all why living at RMC is so much fun!



# RMC: BEFORE & After

Thanks to the modern-day wonders of Facebook, one of our earliest alumni not only got in touch with an old friend, but discovered that she is now the friendly 'face' of RMC, where he had lived 35 years ago! It turns out that Ian Argall (RMC 1973) went to school with long-time RMC receptionist Wendy Slee back when Sir Robert himself was still Prime Minister. Now it's not every day that we hear from a founding member of the College – and thankfully he had some photos to prove it...

1973



2008



And while we're on the topic, it seems that the human 'face' of RMC changes a little quicker than the buildings themselves...



See more of RMC in the 1970s - visit [www.rmc.org.au](http://www.rmc.org.au) and follow the link to Alumni & Friends

# Thirty Years Ago...

The Master has asked me to record my recollections of life at RMC in the late '70s and early '80s, and this I am happy to do. I lived at the College from January 1978 to December 1982. I was not a student: I had completed my PhD in England a month before coming here and had a fixed-term academic appointment at the University.

The Master then was Dr Alan Cole, whose portrait now adorns the College Dining Room. He was an inspirational man, and in all of those years since I knew him at RMC I have frequently thought of him. When he died about five years ago I rang his widow Shirley from the UK, where I now live. Perhaps one of his most obvious traits was his absence of ambition. Let me say at once that I am not one of those people who believe that it is wrong to be ambitious, and I doubt whether Dr Cole himself ever took such a view. He was a classicist, a theologian, a linguist, a writer and broadcaster, eminently capable in all of these, yet I once heard him say to a group of students that if he had not been Master of RMC he'd have been working as a parish clergyman.

The College at that time was in straitened financial circumstances, with the result that the catering was not of as high a standard as one might have hoped. I think that by the time Dr Paul Barnett took over as Master in 1980 the College was in better shape financially. He came to the College having previously been Rector of the key parish of Holy Trinity Adelaide. His ministry prior to that had been in Sydney. I was still living in Sydney in 1992 when Dr Barnett, then Bishop of North Sydney, was shown on television shaking hands with the Queen at the entrance to St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Other College personnel from those early days included Farah Telegraph, who was Bursar. I think he was Palestinian, and had come to Australia having previously been a headmaster in his own country. He would join the students for lunch each day. One of his characteristics was his humility. Although he was old enough to be my father and had once exercised considerable authority as a headmaster, he would insist on giving me the title 'doctor' when we spoke. There was a young woman called Cheryl Budge whose exact role was I think Master's secretary – she and her husband worshipped at one of the churches in the Epping area – and Graham Joyner was Dean. So yes, the College was a happy place to be. There were of course a few sad events, even the occasional tragic one, as is inevitable in any community of persons. But the important point is that the College was just that, a community of persons. Many arriving with the view that the College would be a suitable place to stay whilst at university discovered it to be much more than that – a place where close friendships were formed and where the 'seniors' were there not to keep an eye on them but to minister to them during a critically important period of their lives.

It is a joy to me to be back at RMC as a Visiting Academic Fellow.

**Dr Clifford Jones**  
(Academic Advisor 1978-82; Visiting Academic Fellow 2008)



# The Creeking Custom

When I revisited RMC in the mid-1980s, I was disappointed to find the creek – at least the section directly opposite the space between C and D blocks – shallow and murky, and overgrown with weeds and slush. Another popular RMC ritual, I learned, had gone by the board.

In the 1970s it was still clear, and wide and deep enough to hold a human body laid lengthwise. So at regular intervals, one would witness some poor fellow (or girl – we were an equal opportunity college) being carried by the four extremities down to the creek to be ceremoniously thrown in. It was all good fun (though one fellow claimed he was never able to get his underpants clean afterwards), and the victim was just as likely to be a noisy participant in the next "creeking" exercise.

Sometimes the victim was chosen merely on a whim, but mostly it was to celebrate their birthday. It was much cheaper than a cake and a whip-around, and it was surprising how often it happened, considering that people tended to avoid advertising the dates of their birthdays.

And what about me? Well, believe it or not, my birthday always fell during holidays. But I once got pushed in when I boasted I'd never been creeked.

I could tell a lot more about practical jokes and impractical quirks, but shall refrain because of possible embarrassment to the participants. Besides, someone might start talking about me!

**Malcolm Smith (RMC 1974-77)**