



ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

IN LOCO PARENTIS

Summer 2016 EDITION

The St John's College Parents' Association Executive Committee's quarterly newsletter.

WELCOME

Welcome to 'IN LOCO PARENTIS', the quarterly newsletter of the St John's Parents Association Executive Committee. In this edition we will cover:

- **A Christmas Message from the Chairman of Council**
- **The History of St John's College - Part II**
- **St John's College Academy**

PAfeedback@sjc.co.za : Please refer to the rules published in the Winter Edition 2016 of this newsletter.

A Christmas Message from the Chairman of Council

Jon Patricios

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace..."

For many, in South Africa and abroad, 2016 has been a trying year. In times such as this, the Christmas message of love, hope and rebirth remains more relevant than ever. At St John's we are in a position to live out this message everyday.

The words of our founders as written in our school prayer: to be a home of religious discipline, sound learning and goodwill – is a mantra that encapsulates our country's greatest needs and suggests that St John's can remain a rock in turbulent seas as it has in decades past.

In 1985, during some of the most trying, violent and devious times this country has ever experienced, St John's had as its Visitor Bishop (later to be Archbishop) Desmond Tutu. During tea with an impressionable group of Lower V's this courageous man and visionary had a simple message for us: "Make sure that you make a positive difference to those around you, to South Africa and to the world."

In nearly every interaction as South Africans we have the opportunity to make a difference. From our privileged position at St John's College the obligation is perhaps even greater – but I know we are up to the challenge. I say this confidently because of how often I witness the calibre of our staff, the guidance of our clergy, the caring of our parents and the talent of our pupils.

Early in the New Year, Council and school management will strategise as to how we can take St John's forward towards our 125th anniversary and beyond. At this strategic session both our founding principles and the needs of South Africa will be foremost in our minds., underpinned by our world class ambitions.

I would like to express my gratitude to Paul Edey, Patrick Lees, Jane Lane and Jenny Lobban for their leadership. To all our teachers and support staff – your dedication is appreciated. Thank you to our parents for your commitment to St John's. To our boys and girls from The Bridge to the Sixth Form, we look forward to seeing the changes you will inspire.

Merry Christmas to you and your families. Wishing you peace in your world as we look forward to 2017, a year in which we will continue to make a positive difference to ourselves, South Africa and the world.

THE HISTORY OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE - Part II

"A certain inculcated smattering of knowledge": The Anglo-Boer War years, 1899 – 1902

In our first instalment on the history of St John's College, we traced the origins of our College, its foundation in August 1898 and the initial months of its existence until the first Speech Day, held at the newly-constructed Masonic Hall in Plein Street on 19 December 1898. In this instalment, we look at the College's history from 1899 until 1902 – the period of the Second Anglo-Boer South African War.

Early in 1899, the Johannesburg newspaper *Standard & Diggers' News* congratulated "the youngest scholastic institution in our midst on the success it has already achieved". It said (under the heading "A Local Winchester") that St John's College's modest premises in Plein Street –

"would not be likely to attract attention by reason of 'hallowed halls in ivy clad', but it may be the foundation of just such a college as the old country rightly prides itself upon. If our millionaires would but see to the halls nature may be depended on for the ivy in due time. The new school owes its existence to the efforts of a few Churchmen, ladies of the congregation of St Mary's assisting in raising the fund of £800 on which it was started, the capitalistic element refusing point-blank to give any help. Less than six months ago, St John's started with a dozen boys, and to-day provision has to be made for ninety ... The aim is to establish a high-class public school of a select kind, with the tone characteristic of similar schools in England. Special features are the teaching of Dutch and physical training, in addition to the mind culture provided in the ordinary curriculum. ... The Principal, the Rev JL Hodgson, MA, formerly Assistant Master and Chaplain at King's College, Taunton, Somerset, has made an excellent start ... St John's College, and its needs, should touch a chord in the hearts of those who have obtained honourable positions largely because of efficient disciplinary training in schoolboy days."

By the end of the first term of 1899, in excess of a hundred boys were enrolled at St John's. The villa in Plein Street, where the College had opened her doors in August 1898, was outgrown. In the prospectus issued in July 1898 the College Council had expressed the hope that it would be able to raise sufficient funds to build "a commodious temporary School-house on Stands centrally located". A year later, the Council pursued the matter of obtaining a site for the school building. The Council identified a site in Braamfontein, bounded by Hancock, Smit and Melle streets, as the future location of St John's College. In September 1899, application was made to the City Council for the allocation of the site to St John's. By a quirk of fate – or perhaps it was Providence – the outbreak of war, a fortnight later, precluded the acquisition of the Braamfontein site by St John's College.

War clouds had been gathering over the South African Republic (the independent Boer state in the Transvaal presided over by Paul Kruger) for some time. Ostensibly the dispute between the Boer republic and Great Britain was over voting rights for the thousands of British expatriates who were working in the Transvaal – mainly in the gold-mining industry on the Witwatersrand. These "uitlanders" were so numerous that, if granted voting rights, they would probably outvote the Boers, thus compromising the republic's sovereignty. Consequently, Kruger insisted on a lengthy naturalisation period for these immigrants, which was rejected by the British government. However, the British would probably have had little interest in the remote Transvaal but for the expansionist designs of imperialists such as Cecil John Rhodes, who were enticed by the mineral wealth recently discovered on the Rand.

In August 1899, President Kruger had offered to extend the franchise to "uitlanders" who had resided in the Transvaal for five years or longer. However, the British government had rejected this offer. Kruger then reverted to an earlier offer of a seven-year residency requirement. Soon 10,000 British troops were dispatched to Natal. On 9 October 1899, Kruger sent an ultimatum to Her Majesty's government: unless the troops advancing on the Transvaal's frontiers were withdrawn within 48 hours, her action would be regarded as a declaration of war on the Transvaal. The ultimatum went unheeded. Thousands of people fled by rail from Johannesburg to the Cape and Natal; in their panicking desire to escape, many stood in open cattle trucks. Most businesses and mines on the Witwatersrand shut down.

In the early months of the war, the mighty British imperial army suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of the makeshift Boer forces: Kissieberg, Modderivier, Colenso and Spioenkop remain blots in the copy book of British military history. However, the tide soon turned. Optimistic British expectations about a quick end to the war seemed vindicated when advancing British columns captured Bloemfontein, without resistance, on 13 March 1900. The British commander-in-chief, Lord Roberts, then notified Her Majesty of his confidence that "it will not be very long before the war will have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion".

The inaugural Headmaster of St John's College, the Rev JL Hodgson, was, of course, an Englishman. There can be no doubt about where his loyalties lay in the Anglo-Boer conflict. As such it is not surprising that the Boer authorities deported Hodgson from Johannesburg in March 1900. By contrast, the parish priest of St Mary's Anglican Church, the Rev JT Darragh, who had been one of the prime movers behind the establishment of St John's College, was an Irishman. As a neutral he was permitted to remain in Johannesburg; he acted as Headmaster of St John's for a while but he, too, was eventually forced to join the evacuation. Mr Alexander Benson, a solicitor and parishioner of St Mary's, then took over as sole teacher at St John's. Although numbers were dwindling, a new boy was enrolled on 23 April 1900, seven months after the war had started.

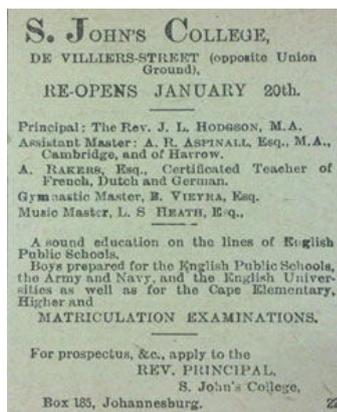
On 22 May 1900, Lord Roberts moved forward from Kroonstad with his main army. Two days later, the British cavalry division crossed the Vaal and deployed north of the river. With flanks and front thus protected, the army

forded the Vaal at Vereeniging, the target being Pretoria via Johannesburg. News of these manoeuvres filtered through to Johannesburg. The fact that Johannesburg was soon to become a scene of military conflict was a signal to Benson to close St John's. Accordingly, when the few remaining boys arrived at school one morning at the end of May 1900, they found no master: during the night, Benson had cycled south to join the British forces.

Thus, the Anglo-Boer War caused the closure of St John's College. The story of the College might very well have ended there, with Johannesburg derelict, less than two years after the school had enrolled her initial pupils. However, as will be seen, our founding fathers were to display great commitment to the survival of our College. To them we are indebted for ensuring that the war was not to sound the College's death-knell.

On 31 May 1900, British forces seized Johannesburg. A few St John's boys went to see the hoisting of the Union Jack. They had the pleasure of welcoming the Rev Mr Darragh, who arrived on a mule wagon in the British army convoy. On 5 June, Pretoria surrendered. Lord Roberts assumed that only "mopping-up" operations remained. In December 1900, he said that the war was "practically over". But, despite the British implementation of a devastating scorched-earth policy and the internment and death of tens of thousands of non-combatant civilians – black and white – in concentration camps, the Boer guerrillas would remain unvanquished until May 1902. It would prove to be the most protracted, costliest and bloodiest war fought by Great Britain for a century.

Once the Union Jack was flying over the Witwatersrand in mid-1900, many civilians returned to Johannesburg. One of Darragh's earliest preoccupations was to revive St John's College. In November 1900, Hodgson (who had gone back to England) received a cablegram from Darragh, requesting him to return to Johannesburg in order to reopen the school. Hodgson sailed to Durban, where he arrived in January 1901. However, on account of the continuing guerrilla war he had to wait until March before he was granted a permit to travel onward into the interior. In April 1901, Hodgson managed to resuscitate St John's College, in the villa in Plein Street.



Five boys turned up on the opening day, and six more were enrolled the following morning. A week later, two more boys joined. The boys were supplied with the College colours, comprising a blazer, cap, hat-band and silk scarf, the colours being salmon pink on a chocolate background, in alternate stripes of broad chocolate and narrow pink. As enrolment gradually increased (by the end of 1901, there were fifty boys in the school), teaching assistance was provided by two army chaplains. A Mr Kernick also taught occasionally, and Mr Barend Vieyra was engaged as gymnastics instructor. Hodgson was joined on the full-time staff by Mr Anton Willem Rakers, a Hollander who taught Dutch, French and German, and who would remain with the College for several years. (A plaque commemorating his contribution to the College can be seen in the entrance arch at the Prep School.)

It was announced in *The Star* of 17 January 1902 that St John's College would be re-opening for the new academic year on 20 January 1902. The school began the new term with 120 boys. Hodgson appointed Mr Alexander Aspinall, who had previously taught at Harrow and Bishops, as assistant master. Aspinall was a keen cricketer, and had played for MCC from 1876 until 1880. Thus it is not surprising that, even before the Anglo-Boer War ended formally, St John's College began to play cricket matches. Years later, Charles Steed OJ reminisced that most of the College's cricket matches at that time were played against military teams: "More games were lost than won but we managed to have some really good tussles."

For example, St John's College played against the Welsh Regiment early in February 1902. Mr Aspinall was one of the opening batsmen for the College XI. (As matches were played against teams comprising adult men, it was customary for masters to play in the school teams.) Unfortunately for Mr Aspinall, he was dismissed for a duck – an occurrence which might have elicited a sardonic comment from one or two of his younger team-mates. The other opening batsman, Duncan Solomon, scored 21. With the aid of twenty extras, St John's posted 86, despite the fact that the scorebook recorded that the last two batsmen were "Out – Absent – 0". (Mr Aspinall may have had a word or two to say on this score!) Mr Aspinall avenged his duck by taking three wickets in the Welshmen's innings. Young Solomon took a five-wicket haul (probably the first in the history of St John's cricket) as the soldiers were dismissed for 57. In their second innings, St John's consolidated their position by scoring 70/3, of which Allan ("Tyke") Fraser made 26. As there was no time for the Welsh Regiment to bat again, St John's won by 29 runs on the first innings.

On 5 April 1902, *The Star* carried an announcement, issued by the Education Department of the Transvaal (now under British administration), that a Government High School for Boys would open at the corner of Gold and Kerk Streets, Johannesburg, on 14 April 1902. The appearance of this government school in close proximity to St John's did not portend well for the future of the College.

The war was formally brought to an end by the Treaty of Vereeniging, concluded on 31 May 1902. After the cessation of hostilities, many civilians returned to Johannesburg, resulting in an increase in the number of pupils entering St John's College. Consequently, it became necessary to expand the teaching staff. Darragh invited the Rev Fitzwilliam Carter (of Magdalen College School and Oxford University) to join the College staff. However, in the aftermath of the war, entry to the new British colonies was controlled rigorously and, before Carter could sail for

South Africa, he had to apply to the colonial authorities for an “indulgence passage”. In a further sign of the resistance that the College was to encounter from the British authorities, the new High Commissioner in Johannesburg, Sir Alfred Milner, initially refused to allow Carter to come to Johannesburg in order to teach at St John's. Eventually, however, Carter was allowed to travel to the Transvaal for that purpose. Other members of staff appointed during this period were the Rev JH Robinson BA (Durham), Mr CT Elliott (St Paul's School, London, and Oxford), Mr WF Candy (Forrest School and Oxford) and Mr GW Johnson BA (Marlborough and Oxford). Miss Caldecott was headmistress of the preparatory section of St John's, and she was assisted by Miss Dunne. With as many as 180 boys now clamouring for admission to St John's College, the villa in Plein Street was inadequate. New accommodation was found in the “Tin Temple”, a dilapidated structure in Kaiser Wilhelm Street (later King George Street), between the Union Ground square and the Wanderers Club. Mr Elliott, who was Games Master and Bursar, recorded the following about the Tin Temple:

“Our school edifice was of corrugated iron and wood, dismally cold in winter and a bake house in summer. In winter I used to break off the class, send the boys to run six times round the Union Ground, ... and then we would carry on, somewhat breathlessly, with our work. In summer, conditions were not very much less unpleasant, the boys were not wholly clean – water being somewhat scarce. If one opened the windows, volumes of dust arrived, so that we had to choose between two evils, smell or dust. Nevertheless, it was possible to forge a happy family, good fun and a certain inculcated smattering of knowledge.”

The Tin Temple's classrooms “formed three sides of a square, the centre was a large, rather dusty, red-earthed ‘quad’. A low-roofed bicycle shed occupied the fourth side, the corrugated-iron fence, very new and shiny, which surrounded the School grounds, forming the back of the shed.”

A recurring theme in the College's early history was the perennial lack of funds to acquire the necessary amenities. Yet, shortly after St John's, with her “motley collection” of 180 boys, occupied the Tin Temple, the princely sum of fifteen shillings was appropriated for the purchase of a cricket bat. A wire-netting cricket net was built in the Tin Temple grounds. According to Mr Elliott, it “served its purpose admirably”. However, because there was no room to get out of the way of a firmly struck straight drive, those of lesser agility were occasionally injured.



***The cricket net in the backyard of the Tin Temple
(Note the sign in the foreground: “St John's College temporary premises”)***



St John's College pupils with the Rev Mr Hodgson and Mr Aspinall – “Tin Temple”, 1902/3



On 1 October 1902, a cross-country race between St John's and Marist Brothers' College was held. Setting out from the Union Ground, the boys ran four miles alongside the Braamfontein spruit, up past Nazareth Home and Barnato Park, and back towards the Union Ground via Hospital Hill. The guest of honour, the Governor of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, his Excellency Lord Milner, was welcomed by the Rev Mr Hodgson and Brother Valerian of Marists. The arrival of horsemen and bicycles announced the impending finish to the run. It was a "capital finish", resulting in a dead heat between Hugh Mallett and "Tyke" Fraser, both of St John's, in a time of 29 minutes. Lord Milner presented the prizes. Mr Hodgson proposed a vote of thanks to Lord Milner for his kindness in being present, and called on the boys for three cheers for His Excellency, which were given "right lustily". (Both the victors, Mallett and Fraser, were subsequently to lose their lives in the First World War.)

Because of the dearth of cricket-playing schools in Johannesburg in those days, St John's entered the Transvaal Cricket League's second division. In order to strengthen the school sides, masters were allowed to play. On 10 November 1902, St John's played against the Government Mines Department. The Mines Department won the toss and elected to bat but collapsed to 119 all out. For St John's, Bertram ("Granny") Floquet took 8/47. Mr Johnson and Gordon Heinekey then put on 106 for the first wicket – probably the first century partnership ever recorded for St John's. St John's declared at 275/6, with Floquet on 78* and Fraser on 26*. St John's won by 156 runs on the first innings.



Bishop Weldon, Bishop of Calcutta and former headmaster of Harrow, visited St John's College on 15 November 1902. The St John's boys, numbering in excess of 200, assembled in the Tin Temple's quadrangle. The Bishop said that, owing to his experience as a schoolmaster at Eton and Harrow, he had a very keen knowledge as to the character of boys, and "could pick out the bad from the good one by merely looking at their faces". He exhorted the boys to be honest and truthful, to look up to their College and support it whether at study or in the playing-fields. As they conducted themselves at school, so would they later in life; but it was not always the studious pupil who came out on top after leaving school. The Bishop told the boys that they would be the future men of South Africa, and that the future task of upholding the Empire would be in their hands.

St John's College boys with the Bishop of Calcutta in the Tin

Temple's quadrangle - 15 November 1902

On 3 December 1902, St John's played against Wanderers Cricket Club at the latter's grounds. Wanderers fielded a strong team which included four men who had already played Test cricket for South Africa. St John's won the toss and – perhaps audaciously, considering the strength of the opposition – sent Wanderers in to bat. Fortune favoured the brave, and Wanderers were restricted to 169/7 (Hutchinson 2/36). Mr Johnson and Heinekey scored 67 for St John's for the first wicket. After Floquet had added 29, Mr Candy and Mallett secured victory for St John's by one wicket.

On 6 and 13 December 1902, St John's played against Marist Brothers College Old Boys. Old Maristonians batted first and scored 237. For St John's, Toby Louw took five wickets. At close of play on the first day, St John's had 100/1. Resuming on the second day, Mr Johnson and Floquet took the score to 147 before the former was dismissed for 67. Floquet, who "was in fine form, giving a great display of his ability", remained at the crease until the score was 193, when he was bowled for 120 – the first century scored by a St John's boy. It was "an excellent innings, without a single chance to hand". Then a rot set in and seven wickets were down for 206, but the last

three men took St John's past the Old Maristonians' total, and St John's eventually reached 261 (Mr Elliott 24, Rev Carter 20). In the end, St John's won by 24 runs on the first innings.

Speech Day was held on Saturday, 20 December 1902. The event was attended by some 700 people, including the Bishop of Pretoria. Halfway through the proceedings, the electric lights went out; the ceremony continued in darkness relieved only by candles glimmering on the platform. "This considered, and the fact that the occasion was the Christmas 'breaking up', and that some hundreds of high spirited boys were present, the order and quiet kept, though by no means absolute, were quite of commendable moderation." In his address, the Headmaster, the Rev Mr Hodgson, said that the College now had 170 boys, taught by eight masters and two governesses. Turning to the College's educational ideals, he expressed himself as averse to all cramming of knowledge, which engendered superficial and false knowledge, and which "entailed the neglect of dull and backward boys, and undue and unnatural pressure of the more gifted". He gave it as his opinion that all education worth the name had to be founded upon religion, and that education was a process of development that brought out everything in a boy's individual character – the good, the bad, the dullness, the brilliance – equally in all three main sides of development, namely the physical, the mental and the moral.

Thus, a few years before the legendary Fr James Okey Nash was to compose the School Prayer (which formulates the College's mission as "sending forth many rightly trained in body, mind and character"), the first Headmaster, the Rev Mr Hodgson, had already pointed the College in that direction. It is a theme that, more than a century later, continues to guide St John's College.

Another successful and enjoyable year for the 72 Academy boys.



Apart from the usual lessons in mathematics, science and English, the boys had some extra interesting experiences this year.

The Grade 11 boys were also invited to two job shadowing days at Nedbank, the first was in the Home Loans division of the bank, and the second was in the Motor Vehicle Finance division, this was all courtesy of one of the St Johns College fathers, Mr Eugene Drotskie. The boys were exposed to all of the different career opportunities available in the banking world and had a great time.

The Grade 11 boys once again enjoyed their Leadership Camp in the Magaliesburg in July. The boys gain great confidence during this excursion, many of them discovering their leadership skills.

Once again the Grade 12 boys have been given a number of opportunities during the year. They attended a very useful financial management workshop presented by Mr Frank Magwegwe of Momentum Life. They tirelessly sold cold-drinks out of the mobi-can throughout the Easter Rugby Festival, and were individually assisted with career guidance during the course of the year.

Two of the Grade 12 boys namely Kholwani Dube and Ngoyi Kazadi entered the St John's public speaking competition in March this year. The boys both delivered excellent speeches and Kholwani was placed in the top 10 of all the speakers who entered.

Both Kholwani and Ngoyi as well as one of the Grade 10 Academy boys Sandile Phakati entered into the Heritage Day Youth Speaking Festival at St John's. Both Kholwani and Sandile were finalists in this new project at St John's College.

The much anticipated Revision Camp took place during the June state school holidays. This year was different, we decided to combine with the Roedean Academy and take the boys and girls out together on the revision camp, to Marelwane for a full week. These boys and girls go to school together every day, so it made sense to join the two academies on this very worthwhile week in the student's lives. Ms Kate Nottingham and Mr Jeremy Naidoo from the science department and Mr Grant Hayward from the maths department, kindly came out to Marelwane during the week and spent many hours in the outdoor classrooms doing revision with the students. The camp was a great success and we will be repeating this in 2017.

The year ended with the very moving Valedictory Service held in the Crypt Chapel on the 13 October, 2016. The boys were awarded with prizes for top achievement in the various subjects. Ngoyi Kazadi was presented with the Sixth Form Bursary for 2017, and Kholwani Dube received the Realema Teacher Internship Bursary. He will be doing his internship at the Prep, and studying for a B.Ed through Unisa.

NOTICE OF THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Parents Association AGM will be held on

31st January 2017 – 18h00 for 18h30

(Venue to be confirmed)

All parents are encouraged and welcome to attend the AGM which will be followed by a cocktail function.

If you would like to join the Parents Association Executive Committee please contact Michelle [McGlynn](mailto:McGlynn@sjc.co.za) on PAFeedback@sjc.co.za

QUOTE

By Charlie Chaplin

"Nothing is permanent in this wicked world, not even our troubles."

Scripture

Romans 12: 2,21

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."