

RIVONIA PRIMARY



1903 - 1983



A wise man once said:

***“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children.
One is roots, the other wings”.***

This thought perhaps best portrays our philosophy here at Rivonia. On the one hand we hope to instil in our children a sense of History and of identity and on the other we prize independent thought and encourage the pursuit of knowledge.

In 1911 the then chairman of the School Committee, Mr. W.G. Manson, addressing a school assembly said:

“I hope that you boys and girls will unite with your teacher and endeavour to make your schoolroom a place of love and learning. Aim high, learn from the past and take the best of the present, so that you may turn out to be useful, positive men and women of the future”.

On this the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the school, I endorse Mr. Manson’s sentiments.

“Go well, Rivonia Primary”.

E.M. SAKS
Headmaster



Every anniversary is in the nature of things a milestone. A child's birthday is never allowed to pass without its concomitant pomp and ceremony. Every mother's birthday is forgotten except at his peril, by the father. Due pomp, ceremony and pride is associated with the 80th Anniversary of Rivonia Primary School, which will take place on 11th November this year.

With deep warmth and on behalf of your School Committee, I extend to the School, the Headmaster, Staff and pupils, our good wishes and congratulations on this momentous occasion.

Despite the changing face of Sandton, and of Rivonia in particular, the prognosis for the future of the school is encouraging and exciting. The growth and development of our school in the last twenty years, to her Centenary, will be watched and cared for by all who have come, and will come, to love her.

E.M. LETTY
Chairman of the School Committee



Happy Birthday Rivonia Primary!

Since our school opened in 1903, eighty years ago, it has been through many different eras and seen many changes.

Through all these passing years however, Rivonia Primary has gone from strength to strength and today stands indisputably as one of the finest Primary Schools in the Transvaal. We as parents are very proud of this fact and appreciate the opportunity our children have to be part of such a school.

The last decade in particular has witnessed rapid growth and expansion, yet in spite of this our school has built up an enviable reputation of communication and co-operation between teachers, pupils and parents.

In no small measure the credit for this achievement must go to our Headmaster Mr. Saks, whose dedication and loyalty to Rivonia Primary has been outstanding.

On behalf of the P.T.A. and parents of the school, on this 80th Anniversary, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Saks and his staff and wish them and our fine school the best of everything for the years to come.

BARBARA BULLOCK,
Chairlady (P.T.A.)



Pudding bowl given to the pupils attending school in 1938 to commemorate the Voortrekker Eeufees.

three times a week from Johannesburg and back. This was a nightmarish experience travelling over bumpy and dusty roads, surrounded by all kinds of merchandise, parcels and the post bag. The Post Office for the district was called Edenburg, which caused considerable confusion, as there is also an Edenburg town with post office in the Orange Free State. The Post Office was housed in the first and only shop in the area, owned by Mr. Miller, whose daughters still live in Rivonia. Postal stamps were often bartered with eggs!

On one occasion a young lady teacher arrived by bus to take up her duties at the school. She arrived rather dishevelled by the bumpy journey and her suitcase was deposited next to her at the side of the road. When asked if she was the new teacher who had arrived, she replied firmly, "Yes, and I am the new teacher who is departing!", and promptly got on the same bus on its journey back to town!

The Edenburg and District Rural Association was founded in 1919 to further the interests of the district. One of the members of the committee suggested that the name of this area be changed to Rivonia, as it is situated between the two rivers and this suggestion was unanimously adopted. Consequently, the area became known as Rivonia, the school was named Rivonia Government School and the Post Office and Police Station officially adopted the name Rivonia. This all came about in 1922.

Gradually the numbers on roll at the school increased to about 80, and a fourth member of staff was appointed. On 4th February 1923, another young lady teacher arrived by bus and reported for duties at the school the next day. She was Miss Anthonette Kathleen Jacobs, just qualified from the training college at Graaff-Reinet. She taught at the school uninterruptedly for over 42 years, retiring at the end of 1964.

Sporting facilities were practically non-existent and as more and more families moved into this area it was decided to form a "School Sporting Club" and residents were invited to join as members. So the first tennis court was built on the school grounds and many an enjoyable Saturday afternoon was spent on it. Jacaranda trees were planted in a circle next to the court, providing the necessary shade during intervals and when sitting out.

The school building consisted of three classrooms in a row facing west, towards the main road. Between the two rooms, on the northern side, was a wooden partition, which could easily be removed, thus making the two rooms a school hall. Here concerts and other functions were held, as well as religious services by various denominations. Although seven boreholes were drilled on the school site, no water was found, not even at the depth of over 200 feet (67m). Water was collected from the roof when rain fell, and stored in water tanks on



*Miss O'Connor
(2nd Principal of Rivonia Primary)*

both ends of the school building. For night functions, pressure kerosene lamps were used for lighting purposes. Then an eighth borehole drilled yielded a maximum of 300 gallons of water per hour. It was quite an occasion when a windmill with a 1000 gallon tank on a stand was erected and water laid on with taps to the school, and also to the Principal's residence on 1st December, 1924. A small school garden was started and a number of pine trees were planted in the grounds. In 1926 there were 62 pupils, of whom 10 were English speaking, spread over all classes from Grade 1 to Standard 6. On the recommendation of the Inspector of Education, the 10 English pupils were transferred to Rosebank school, and Rivonia became an Afrikaans-medium school. It was removed from the Pretoria School Board and was zoned from then on under Witwatersrand Central School Board.

As more English-speaking families moved into Rivonia, representation was made to the authorities to establish an English-medium section at the school on account of the difficulties in transport to Rosebank. This request was granted and a group of fifteen pupils from Grade 1 to Standard 3 started classes with Miss C.J. Lemmer as their teacher on 22nd April 1930. Miss C.B. O'Hare managed this group until 25th March 1937, but as very little support was forthcoming from other English families, the effort was abandoned in September 1938.

At the end of 1942, Mr. Stopforth retired from the service of the Transvaal Education Department after 32 years. He became a very successful maize farmer near Balfour. We salute a teacher who, under difficult circumstances, played a leading role in the community of Rivonia for over thirty years.

Mr. A.H. Coetzee took up his duties as Principal in a permanent capacity on 11th October 1945. Mrs. A.G. Letty joined the staff in 1946. About this time the water supply became an acute problem when the existing borehole dried up. A ninth hole was drilled, but yielded only 120 gallons an hour. As electricity had been laid on by Escom, an electric motor with pump was installed at the new borehole. The water problem was only finally solved when a peri-urban water scheme was introduced in the northern areas. While Mr. Coetzee was on a six-month vacation leave in 1952, he was transferred to a school in the Northern Transvaal.

I, the writer of this article, was instructed by telegraph from Headquarters to assume duties as Acting-Principal, on 29th July 1952. The enrolment at the school was then 75, and my two



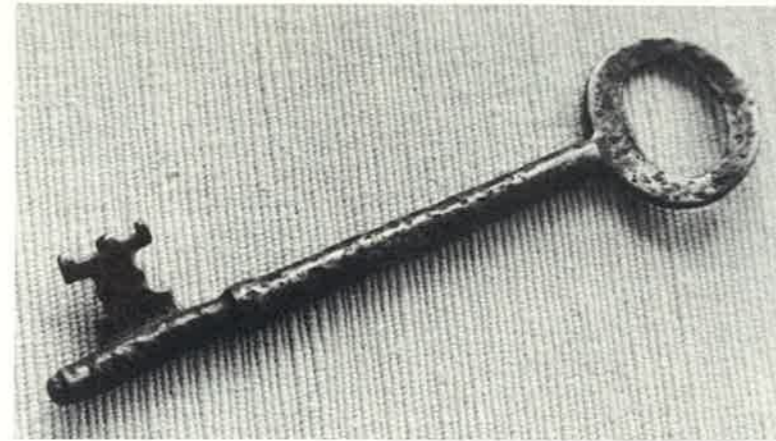
The old school building.

assistants were Mrs. A.G. Letty and Mrs. A.K. Wilson. A proper school uniform was introduced, using an existing school badge, which was heraldically approved and registered. The motto, *Contentione Vince* (Strive to Conquer) was included. The pupils were divided into three competitive groups for the annual Inter-House Athletics Competition, and the late Mr. Jan du Bruyn donated a shield for the winning house. A fine collection of trophies was built up for individual and team winners. The next year (1953) the first inter-school athletic Sports Meeting was held at Rivonia. Soon other smaller schools in the northern and eastern areas joined us, and the proper inter-school Sports Association was formed. With the enthusiastic support of the P.T.A. and School Committee, a suitable swimming bath was built at the school and annual swimming galas were held.

When I took over as Principal, Rivonia was an Afrikaans-medium school. More and more English-speaking families moved into this area. Apart from a few private schools, the nearest English-medium school was Rosebank, and transport to Rosebank was a major problem. Apparently the parents noticed the improvements and development of Rivonia School and within a year I was approached by a delegation of parents requesting an English-medium section. A survey of pupils in the age group 6-8 years old was made, and at the beginning of 1955 Grades 1 and 2 in English instruction were started with Mrs. M.C. Bryden as the teacher. This was the start of the Rivonia Parallel-medium School, which lasted until the 26th March 1970, when the Afrikaans pupils were transferred, with their teachers, to the newly-built Afrikaans-medium school of Bryanston.

That was a sad day for all concerned. Many a tear was shed as my wife and I stood at the door of the Assembly Hall, with lumps in our throats, and shook the hand of every child leaving the school for the new one. For fifteen years we were a happy community, playing soccer, tennis, cricket, basketball, etc. etc., together in one team, representing our school in inter-school sports, and swimming galas, going on educational and holiday tours together etc. We had an alternate English Afrikaans week and it had been very gratifying to see how quickly and efficiently the pupils used their second language.

An outstanding event in the history of the school was the Golden Jubilee celebrations on Saturday, 21st November, 1953. The Sunday newspapers (both Afrikaans and English) were friendly enough to place a news item about this event rather prominently. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Miss M.K. O'Connor (if she is still alive) was asked to contact me. On the same day as the newspapers appeared, a niece of hers phoned me to say that she



One of the keys of the original building.

was indeed still alive, and gave me her address in Cape Town. We invited her to the celebrations but a prompt reply came from her declining our invitation, owing to her old age and inability to make the long journey. She sent us a photograph of herself, which was hung in the Principal's office. Quite a few of the first pupils enrolled in 1903, including Susarah Botha and one of the Rajah sisters attended, however, and related some memories of those far-off days.

The school built its own swimming bath which was officially opened by Mr. P.G.J. van Vuuren, M.E.C., on 22nd October, 1960. The old school buildings, which had served their purpose for 52 years were levelled and playing fields were laid out on the site in 1965/1966. The new school buildings were officially opened by the Director of Education, Mr. A.J. Koen, on 14th May, 1966.

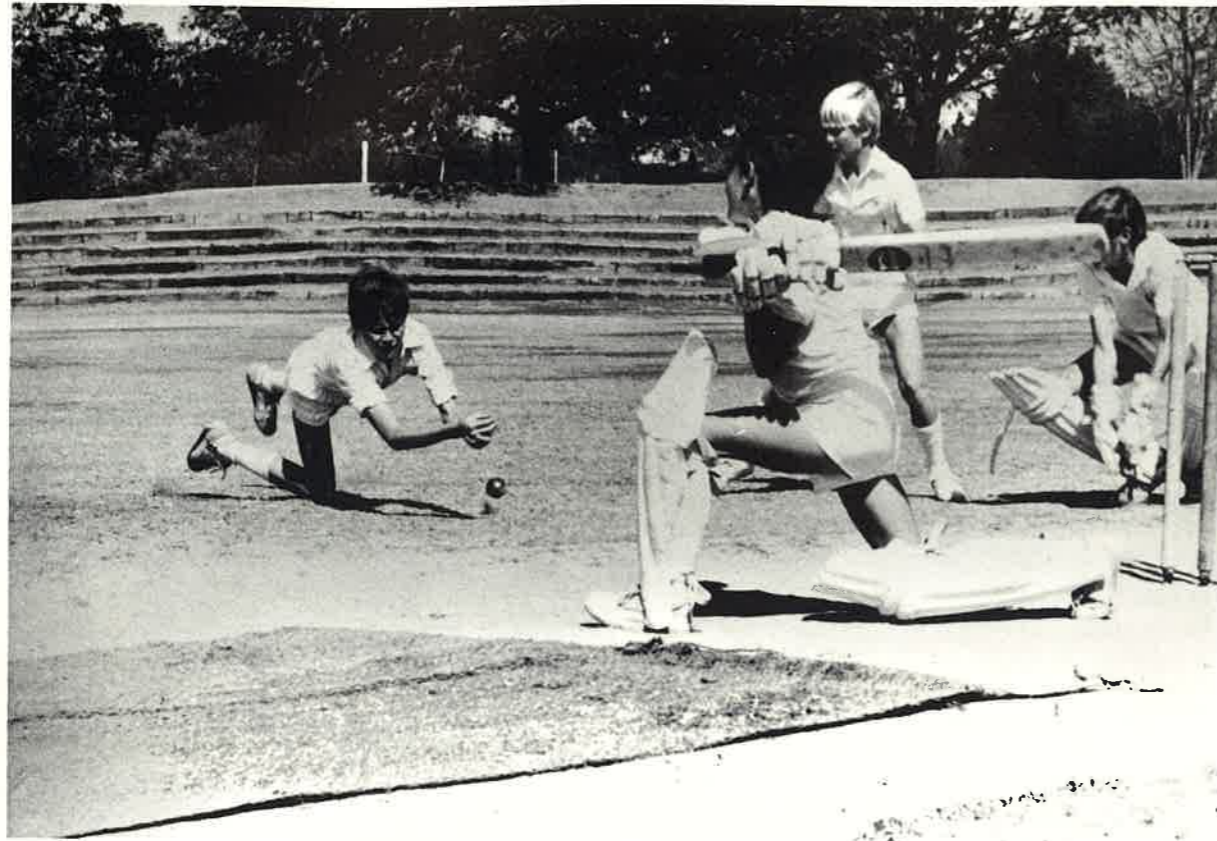
The last function I attended in my official capacity as Principal, just before I retired, was the official opening of the Johan Geertsema School Hall on 6th May, 1972. I felt greatly honoured that the School Committee had decided to name the hall after me. A bronze bust of me was sculpted by an ex-pupil of our school, Philip Minnaar, and this was put up in the foyer of the hall.

My successor, Mr. E. Saks, took over at the beginning of 1973 and since then the school has experienced a period of accelerated growth. The current enrollment is 915 and it is the largest primary school in Sandton.

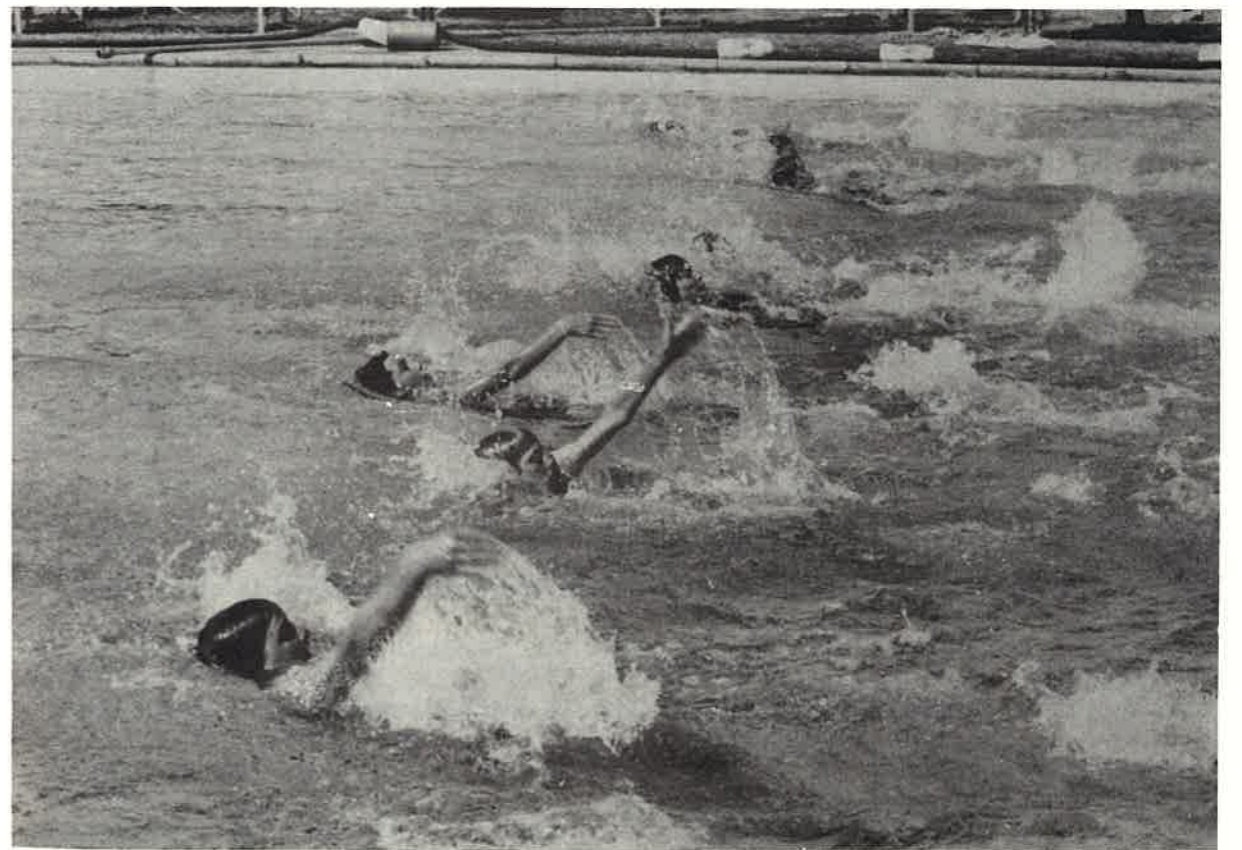
While writing this article and going through all the old records, nostalgic memories have crowded my mind of the good times, and also of perhaps not so happy events, of the loyal support of parents and parent bodies, and of staff members, of the love children give so spontaneously, of the goodwill one experiences from ex-parents, ex-pupils and ex-staff members. Teaching is, after all, a very rewarding vocation.



Celebrating the Voortrekker Centenary.



Rivonia at play





Schoolboy Memories of Rivonia

MURRAY MEIKLE
"Meikles Mount"
SWAZILAND
22/08/83

The ox wagon journey had already begun. We were on our way to take up residence in Rivonia, a name still to be coined for the area was then known as Edenburg. But to us, my brother and I, it was "Oupa's farm".

My grandfather and others had bought land in what is now Rivonia soon after the Anglo-Boer war. There had been talk that a railway line was to be built between Johannesburg and Pretoria and the land had been bought in anticipation. But World War I came and the railway project was shelved, and later abandoned, but by that time Rivonia was established.

My grandfather had turned an open piece of land into a flourishing fruit and flower farm, but had recently died, which was one of the reasons why we were going to live in Rivonia. As we journeyed along, my brother and I felt our excitement rising at the prospect of staying permanently in the country.

The year was 1922 and, with memories of the civil war still fresh in our minds, we felt happy we were leaving our home in Orange Grove. We were still telling everyone how we had watched from a distance the aerial bombardment of Fordsburg, the headquarters of the striking miners; how we had seen the "flying machines" as we called them then, swooping down and up on the horizon and heard the sound of "thunder", and how many of the ex-servicemen of World War I had been called up to assist the police, drawn from all parts of South Africa, and how they had again been fighting trench warfare, but this time in the streets of Johannesburg.

But now that was a memory and we were looking with keen anticipation to the new life on the farm we had so often visited in school holidays.

It had so much to offer young boys: an abundance of fruit, a marvellous river to play and swim in, all the many activities of the farm — cows to milk, fields to plough and, most of all, miles of space in which to run. We seemed to do a great deal of running in those days, imagining ourselves a train, a motor car, a tram, or an athlete winning the mile.

As the oxen plodded along that day, we sang old World War I songs and waggled our bare toes in the great joy of being relieved of the bondage of boots. Farm life meant bare feet and those feet took us where no vehicle could go. We were to explore every inch of the two rivers which bounded Rivonia, and which, so Dad told us at the time, gave Rivonia its name. "River on each side" was telescoped to "Riv — on — ea" and so became "Rivonia".

As the oxen plodded along what we knew as the Pretoria Road, now known as Louis Botha Avenue, no doubt we passed other ox wagons, a horse or two, a mule cart, an occasional T-model Ford, but I don't remember. I was busy thinking of another trip I had made a year earlier along the same road. A cousin and I had been on holiday then at "Oupa's farm" and had decided to visit my home at Orange Grove. We set off early, telling no one, and walked on foot the thirteen miles to Orange Grove, arriving at my home to be met by an astonished servant. He was there to look after my father who had



"A Picnic", Cnr. 3rd Ave. & Stigling Ave. 1914.

not joined us for this particular holiday. The servant gave us lunch and we walked back, arriving at the farm at dusk, to find my mother much agitated, having alerted the police about our 'disappearance'. We were thoroughly scolded, but otherwise none the worse for our day-long hike. In fact, we were secretly rather proud of ourselves, particularly having overheard some adult say "twenty-six miles — not bad for a 10-year old".

And it wasn't bad going, either, for our old friend Foxie, a mongrel belonging to our grandparents. My brother and I were extremely fond of Foxie and there had grown between us that rare sort of rapport peculiar to young boys and dogs. Foxie would come all the way from the farm to Orange Grove just to visit us and, after a meal and a romp, would return all the way back to Rivonia again. These visits became so regular that Foxie became our postman and carried notes to and from our grandparents tied onto his collar. They were always delivered.

But now we were going to live permanently with Foxie and this alone was a matter of excitement. With him, we were to roam far and wide. In fact, in the years that followed we were to boast that our bare feet had covered every inch of Rivonia. In time, we grew hard callouses on the soles, so that we could walk over sharp stones and rough surfaces that made others yelp.

At last the ox wagon halted at the Sand river and when we had crossed it (which we could never do when it was in flood), we had arrived at our new home.

My grandfather's house was on a ten-acre plot stretching from the Sand river to what is now known as Stigling Avenue, close to my uncle's farm which ran between Stigling Avenue and the main road. I had, on a previous visit, watched the building of our house, with bricks of unbaked mud, the walls plastered with builder's lime and whitewashed. The roof was thatch, and the bedroom floors were made of a composition of old newspapers (my uncle's formula), very comfortable to walk on with a cork-like texture. Although not equipped with modern amenities, the house was comfortable and served us well during the 1920's to stay in Rivonia.

In this day and age, when we accept the average high standard of living, with its many facilities and gadgets, as the norm, it is hard to appreciate how poor the average people were then, when judged in terms of worldly goods, but how rich they were in their natural environment.

Children were not confined to their gardens, were not dependent on manufactured toys, T.V., the motor car or organised sport. Toys were few and those that were available expensive. There were virtually no manufacturing industries in South Africa then and everything, from roofs to flooring, from shoes to sealing wax, had to be imported. Iscor had yet to be built and was not in production until the early thirties. The manufacture of shoes was just starting in Port Elizabeth.

We children made our own toys, our ships and trains, our clay oxen, horses, soldiers, our bows and arrows. Pot clay was eagerly sought along the river banks, to be fashioned into small animal and other shapes and often baked in the oven. The whole of Rivonia was our 'back-yard' and it's doubtful if the world could offer a better one, or a more creative environment. In the safe waters of the Jukskei and Sand rivers (no bilharzia then, no pollution), in deep pools between wide sand banks we learned to swim. We built dams and bridges, houses, castles, whole towns in the sand. We enacted battles learned in history lessons.

And while we played we ate fruit. Most people living in Rivonia grew fruit in varying quantities, as the area was composed mainly of fruit, flower and poultry farms, with produce for the Johannesburg market. Most farms were small — ten acre plots. Some people were full-time farmers; some, like my father whose ten-acre plot next to the one we lived on, was known as "Daddy's farm", were 'leisure-time' farmers. Father was in business but a keen sparetime horticulturist and had planted his ten acres with deciduous fruits of all kinds, including William pears and delicious Ribson Pippin apples now grown only in Europe. We ate fruit solidly from early November, when the Methley plums ripened, until the end of May when the last William pear came out of the cold room. We stuffed our shirts full in the morning, using them like Kangaroo pouches, and drew on our 'stocks' during the day.

Springs and fountains abounded, but I do not remember any boreholes. Those folk not lucky enough to have a spring on their property, dug a well. Polythene piping had yet to be invented and galvanised steel pipes had to be imported from overseas at a very high price, so many people had to carry water from the well to the house. Electricity had not then come to Rivonia and windmills were very much part of the scene. I remember the capped well in the grounds of Rivonia school over which stood a windmill.

We started at Rivonia school in 1923. The building at that time comprised two rooms and a verandah. One classroom was for the grades who were taught by the, then newly appointed, Miss Jacobs. The other was for standards up to pre-high school taught by the headmaster, Mr. Stopforth, whose house was adjacent to the school.

These were the days before schools were specified as 'Afrikaans or English medium'. We were taught in both languages, with rather more Afrikaans. The standard of Afrikaans was very much higher than I could comfortably cope with at first, having up to then been instructed only in English. However, the two years I spent at Rivonia school were to stand me in a very good stead in later years and I am indebted to the school where I acquired a standard of Afrikaans higher than that of the average child brought up in an English-speaking home.

In the classroom we used slates and chalk mostly, particularly for dictation. The cane was liberally used and, today I and probably others are none the worse for that. When looking back over the sixty years that separate me from those days, I see Mr. Stopforth, the then headmaster and our tutor, as a very likeable person and a devoted teacher. I recognise how fortunate I was to have had a man of his calibre as an influence in my early life.

I do not remember any of the children coming to school on bicycles. Almost everyone walked, everyone bare foot. My brother and I and some others covered a distance of three miles each way. Those children living even further from the school were supplied by the government with donkeys, which they rode to school bare back. I remember that some of those children were almost invariably absent from school just after it had rained, and it was discovered that this was because their donkeys were being used for ploughing, their parents having no animals of their own to do the job.



"Anyone for Tennis?" Rivonia School courts 1920. Mr. Stopforth (Principal) on the far right.

We played various games, a very popular one being called "Kennekie". It required no sophisticated equipment — just two sticks, a very short one and a longer one which we used as a baton to strike the short one. It provided us with endless enjoyment but I have never seen it played since those days.

We were very fortunate in having a tennis court at Rivonia school, where I and others learned to play tennis and acquire a love for the game which, certainly in my case, lasted for many years.

In 1925 I left Rivonia school for high school in Johannesburg and travelled each day by bus. The first public transport that I remember was a lorry-cum-bus, its rear end canvassed over and two bench seats either side. It took the mail as well as passengers. It had solid rubber tyres at the rear and used to stick on Elkoms Hill — now known as Morningside — whenever the road was very wet. Incidentally, in those days there was not a single house between Rivonia and Sandown. And there was no tar until we reached "Soggots Corner", a single small café-cum-shop at the corner of Oxford Road and Tyrwhitt Avenue in Rosebank.

There was great excitement when the "luxurious" Berlei bus came into use, supplementing the old canvassed lorry and introducing a new era in public transport. Diesel engines had not been introduced and this vehicle had a very under-powered petrol engine with which it crawled, snail-like, up Elkoms Hill and trundled along with much vibration. But it was a bus in its own right, with proper seats, and we were proud of it.

As generally all the passengers knew one another, there was much talk on the way in the Johannesburg, in which the driver usually joined. On occasions, some of us regular passengers were late but the driver would always wait. He would admonish us and swear it was the last time of waiting, but there was never a 'last time', not in my time.

The mail was delivered to Miller's Store, very close to where the school is now and everyone fetched it from there.

In a fit of nostalgia a year or so ago, I revisited Rivonia hoping to find some trace of our old house and its immediate environment. But I found on that spot a totally new world in which nothing looked familiar. It now exists only in my memory.

Log Book Extracts

It is T.E.D. policy that a Principal keep a log of important happenings at his School. In the early days this often took the form of a diary. The entries into these log books are often both illuminating and amusing. Here for your pleasure, we repeat a few.

Oct 3rd 05

School re-opens with an attendance of 11 children. Our new child admitted Francina Van de Sandt —

Holiday given — Empire Day.

Gave a picnic — took children to Leuwatop.

To-day the school has been closed as no children arrived at school on account of a heavy-rain fall occurring between the hours of 7 AM and 11 AM.

Wrote

Copy of report. June 14th 1907.

The well is dry. Probably it ought to be sunk deeper. Two new mattresses are required for the teacher's quarters.

Ascension Day. I did not give this holiday as I forgot to until too late. May 9th 07

Report of Inspection - 17th September, 1908.

The pump is again out of order. I have been obliged to make this statement over and over again. It seems that the pump is altogether a bad one and repeated repairs have not rendered it satisfactory for more than 3 weeks at a time. The teachers are dependent upon a neighbour's open well for all their water.

May 9th 1910

School closed on account of the news of the death of H.M. the King.

October 23rd 1911

On the 30th January, 1911, I succeeded Miss M. K. O'Connor as Principal of the Rietfontein 15 Government-School. I arrived at Park Station, Johannesburg on Tuesday, January 24th, however, on account of being misdirected, as I was a stranger, I only reached the farm on Thursday afternoon, 26th, hence the delay in assuming duties according to date fixed in the School Calendar for 1911.

Teachers and



Children



"A man never stands so high as when he stoops to help a child."





Teachers and Children



I think back...

This is written at the request of Mr. E. Saks, Principal of the Rivonia Primary School, and concerns my recollections of Rivonia, its residents, the school's surroundings etc.



Antonette Wilson (nee Jacobs)

Fifty years ago I received Temporary Appointment as assistant teacher at the Rivonia School — to take effect from the 5th February 1923. In order to ascertain where Rivonia was situated and how to reach there, I called at the "Tin Temple" (a small building near Park Station) where the School Inspectorate was housed, only to learn to my dismay, that none of the Inspectors had heard of Rivonia — let alone how to get there. (I was to learn later, that the Rivonia School fell under the Pretoria Inspectorate).

Many hours later and after numerous inquiries I learnt that Rivonia was fifteen miles north of the City and that the S.A.R. operated a bus service between the Zoo Gates and Rivonia.

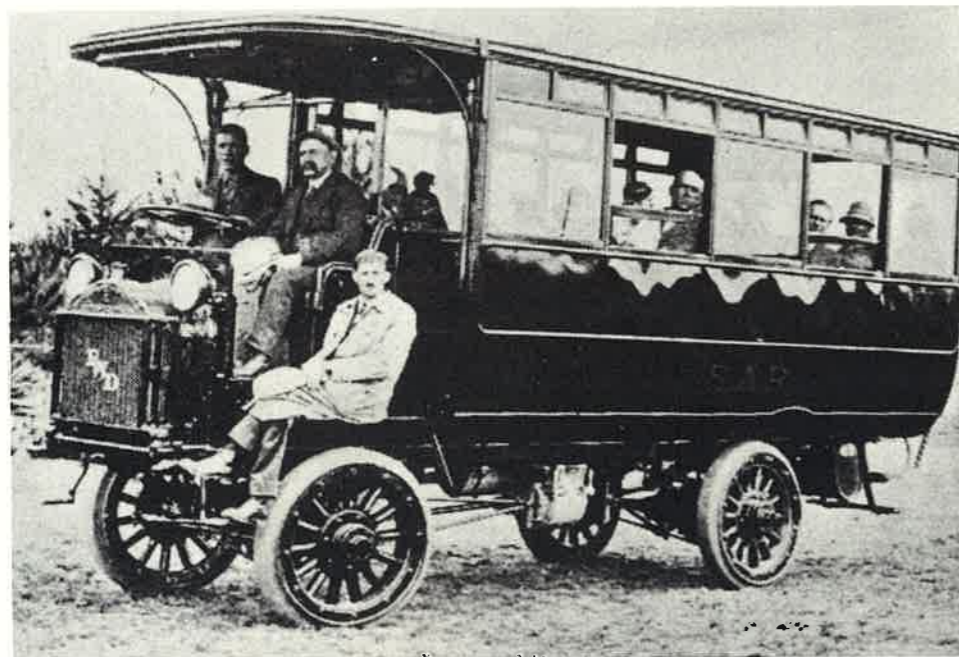
Tired and dejected, I arrived here feeling more like returning to Johannesburg on the first available bus than an interview with the School Principal, Mr. Stopforth. (He later told me that the teacher who had been appointed before me, when asked if she was the new teacher, replied: "Yes, I'm the new teacher who's come and I'm the teacher who's going" — and she promptly returned to the cab in which she arrived.

To add to my frustrations there was no Boarding Establishment, and, had it not been for the kind offer of Mrs. Nel (whom I had met on the bus) to board me for £5 per month (laundry inclusive), I believe I would have acted as the other teacher had.

Rivonia School comprised two classrooms — one of which could be partitioned off should a third classroom be required, plus a verandah.

The enrolment was very limited and the Principal and I were responsible for four classes each. He taught Std III — VI, did all the Administrative Work and P.T. for all the boys. I had the Grades, Std I and II, and the P.T. for all the girls plus the sewing for all the girls. At the end of the year the Needlework Album of the Std VI were sent to the Needlework Supervisor who inspected the standard of darning, patching, knitting, dresses and notes. The girls had really worked very hard, for, if the work was not of a high standard their Std VI or as called the "School Leaving Certificate" was not endorsed. Lena Mentz (nee Prinsloo) would bear me out on that.

The pupils had no School Uniforms and they either walked to School, rode on donkeys or arrived in little carts drawn by donkeys. There was a camp at the back of the School where the donkeys were grazed and rested until after School when they took their "charges" home. It was not a hazardous undertaking to travel on the Rivonia Road since there was virtually no traffic. (I cannot recall the names of even two local car owners. Some of our pupils lived at Bothasfontein - near Kyalami - in Sandown and across the river where Morningside Manor Townships).



Rivonia bus.

We were a very happy little Group! The Principal's wife was so much part of the School but how she coped I just do not know, for there were no facilities, but in spite of being the Mother of six and thus naturally very busy, she still found time to make soup daily for all the pupils during the winter months, and that on an old-fashioned coal stove.

The Principal and I had our birthday three days apart and we used to club together and treat the children to cold drinks and cakes, while on that "great" day playtime invariably lasted two hours. The children would arrive extra early and decorate the classrooms with willow branches, flowers and birthday wishes. Our B.B. dusters and chalks were hidden but we could not have used the blackboards anyway for every square inch was used for drawings and "Good wishes".

What great excitement there was when the Duke of Windsor, then the Prince of Wales was to visit Johannesburg! Mr. Stopforth hired a large Railway lorry and very early in the morning we set off — each holding a little Union Jack. When the Prince arrived there was tremendous cheering and waving of flags. We had a close-up view as the car in which the Royal Visitor travelled was going at a very slow pace. I did overhear one little girl say, and very audibly, "He's not a real Prince — look he's wearing ordinary clothes, not like a Prince's clothes". When the Duke of Kent visited the City we were off again to see and cheer him at Milner Park.

The number of pupils by now had increased and this resulted in the arrival of Miss O'Hare (now Mrs. John Bakker). She was in charge of the English medium classes (the other classes were Afrikaans medium).

Mr. Stopforth quite often went on to the verandah, and looking towards Aasvoëlkop (Northcliff direction) would remark, "It's going to rain — get your children packed up and send them home". We never disagreed with him on that point for it ensured a free and early afternoon for us.

As I have already mentioned some of our pupils had a long walk to School and I cannot forget one little girl in particular who, with her sister and brother had to walk from Bothasfontein. She was a timid little thing about seven years of age. She never looked happy like the other children of her age. She arrived late every morning, used to open the door quietly — lips tightly pursed — no excuses for being late — no salutation. I used to say "Good morning" — no response until one morning I said, "You have grown into such a pretty girl now that you have learnt to say Good morning". It worked! The following morning she had not opened the door properly when she just about shouted at me "Môre Juffrou". From then on we were great friends and she used to make me her confidante — mainly about conditions at home. Poor little soul — no wonder she did not have much to smile about! Once when the Principal was on long leave the Acting Principal inspired by "Summerhill" no doubt



Rivonia bus passing through Rivonia.

tried to introduce the Neil System to our school. Miss O'Hare and I were not impressed, but the kids! "Playtime" the pupils were told that they could just continue playing, the boys could use the School boxing-gloves, cigarettes were given to them — even to the little boys in the grades and the girls were given chocolates.

On finding some little boys lying at the back of the School "green in the face" we decided to take drastic steps — so before "Playtime" Miss O'Hare and I used to forewarn our pupils of the punishment that would be meted out if they dared to accept cigarettes, chocolates or not return to their classrooms after "Break", so after a few days it was back to Law and Order and an end to "progress".

I think I must have been one of the first young people to "thumb a lift", this is what happened: I had spent the week-end in the City, and on Monday morning I found to my horror that there was no bus to Rivonia! I did, however, get a bus to Rosebank where I saw a coaltruck. I summed up courage and inquired where the truck was going, and when the driver said Rivonia, I pleaded with him to give me a lift. He went as far as what is known as "The Grail". From there I walked to School none the worse for wear bar a few smudges on my good dress. However, I was not too late and the Principal was very understanding. The roads were all dirt roads and in a terrible state after a heavy downfall. One day in particular I recall when I was wearing a pair of three guinea lizard skin shoes to school. Some hours before closing time the rain came down in torrents. I remember looking at my shoes then at the road. My shoes were much too precious to get ruined in the muddy water so I walked barefooted to Sleepy Hollow. I had already lost a pretty "coat Frock" — chewed to pieces by a giddy goat — as my frock hung on the clothes line.

Rivonia in 1923 had a few scattered houses, three general dealer stores — no electricity — hence no street lighting, this of course is still non-existent despite all the PROGRESS.

The nearest doctor was in Rosebank — no Pharmacy, no water laid on. People depended on the yield of their bore-holes, wells and water-tanks. There was no Post Office. A Post Office was built sometime in the 30's when Lizzie van Breda took over as Postmistress. (Remember her weighing my daughter then a three week old baby on the Post Office Scale in 1941). How fortunate we are in having Lizzie with us still!

Mr. Miller (Ester Hurwitz and Sylvia Bietz's father) had the Postal Agency and we used to collect our mail three times a week. The public telephone was also at Mr. Miller's store, and if any of the residents were called Mr. Miller would send his assistant Mr. Wiseman, on his pushbike to deliver the messages.

What stamina people like Mr. and Mrs. Miller and Mr. and Mrs. Cohen had! They used to go to town on an open, horse-drawn cart, in the very early hours of the morning to collect the goods for their



Historic School gates made from the original railings of the 1st road bridge across the Sandspruit.

shops. I don't think there are many of their calibre left.

We were more like a large happy family here and we all knew each other. We enjoyed the simple pleasures e.g. school sports, concerts (what local talent could be mustered) and dances. The dances were held at "Hamilton Hall", a private residence where one floor was made of compressed paper and believe me, easy and pleasant to dance on. Many of the older 'Groups', ladies would arrange themselves against the wall and enjoy a cup of tea and some cake and, I think indulge in a little bit of "skinder".

The bus service like all bus services, was not good, but the people in charge made up for it. They were Mr. de la Porte, Mr. Taylor and later "Oom Ben de Lange". Many were the unscheduled stops they made; if a passenger, for instance, wanted to collect a parcel of meat we stopped, if a word with one of the locals was desired we stopped, and once after a tooth extraction Mr. de la Porte took me right down to "Sleepy Hollow" by bus.

A **goods bus** went into town on Saturdays. The scene inside was a colourful one. The passengers sat on long seats on either side, the womenfolk in their best bibs and tuckers — baskets of brightly coloured flowers and boxes of fruit on the floor — ready to be sold in the city.

Sleepy Hollow has a very special place in my heart for that is where I stayed for many years — first with Mr. and Mrs. Nel — who were like parents to me. I remember them with great affection. After opening a "Tea Garden" they sold to Percy and Peggy Harvey. The Harvey's virtually took me over with "Sleepy Hollow". I was their only boarder for a long time. My husband paid his first visit to me at "Sleepy Hollow". We became engaged there — our wedding reception was held there and Elizabeth, our daughter's christening party was also held there, the hotel was truly a home to me.

A few words now on names and places well known to all Sandtonians. **Leeuwkop:** There was one European and a few Bantu workers. Mr. Furstenburg, who was in charge was a unique character with a wonderful sense of humour. He was also one of the few car-owners and it was a great treat to go to town in his Ford. He and his wife loved having young people in their home. Once they took Doris Nel, Dorothy Culbert and myself to a dance. Instead of bringing us home they took us to Leeuwkop for late supper. They insisted that we spend the night — so it was 'Hobson's Choice' and the next morning we sat down to breakfast in our evening dresses.

We arrived home to find a distraught Mr. and Mrs. Nel and Mrs. Culbert who had spent a sleepless night imagining all the most terrible things that could have happened to us. Oom Vos couldn't have

worried! On the contrary he expressed surprise at their concern when they should have remembered that we were in good hands.

Bryanston: Nothing but bush and plantation and just one cottage where the Manager lived. My husband often walked from "Sleepy Hollow" to shoot guinea fowls which he gave to the Harveys. These were often part of the menu.

Woodmead — was known as "Rocklands" and belonged to Sir Thomas Cullinan. Lady Cullinan's sister, Mrs. Berrington lived there until it was cut up into a Township.

I cannot end this article without mentioning **Alex Tweeddale**. He did a great deal for Rivonia and District Rural Association. I wonder if Rivonia would have had a Hall if it was not for the combined efforts of Alex, Percy, Harvey and others. A lot of credit is due to them.

One of my most treasured possessions is a silver dish, duly inscribed and presented to me by Alex on behalf of the Association, when I retired as Hon. Sec. to the Rural Association.

Ex-pupils of mine who are still in Rivonia or nearby are Lena Mentz, Gezina Jonker, Beryl Powell, Thelma van Harmelen, Esther Hurwitz, Koos and Katie Botha (whose children Nico and Alice were also with me), Nicolaas Oosthuizen, Hennie Gunning, Martiens Botha, Dr. Peter Becker (I knew him when he was in crawlers — and it did not matter where met, Peter with his mother or nanny, he was always ready to sing, after which a sweet went down well), Edwin Letty, some of the du Bruyns and our daughter Elizabeth Holloway.

Over the years, many of my old pupils have visited me and it has been good to meet them and especially gratifying to learn that many have achieved great, successful careers.

So, instead of a term's teaching, I was on the Staff of Our School for thirty-six years and am now an old granny, but with so many happy memories.

I must add that I was extremely fortunate to have worked under Headmasters such as Mr. Stopforth and Mr. Geertsema. I was with Mr. Geertsema for approximately twelve years and believe me he worked hard. His wife, Bets, like Mrs. Stopforth, was ever ready to assist when required — making costumes for our concerts, floral arrangements, helping with the singing, baking, etc. May they enjoy a happy retirement!

Finally I wish to extend to Mr. and Mrs. Saks, the Staff, Parents and Pupils my very best wishes. May your memories some day of the Rivonia School be as happy as mine! Bless you!

ANTONETTE WILSON (nee Jacobs)

P.O. Box 4, Rivonia.
15th June, 1973.

POTTERY

*In the year of seventy-one
A few of our pupils
Thought how much fun
It would be to start
Extra-mural Pottery.
Thus, with limited funds
Two kilns were bought
So that these young Rivonians
Skills could be taught.
A teacher stepped in
To help with this duty
And soon they were making
Items of great beauty.*



*They learnt the principles
Of coils and slabs
Of pinch-pots and scoring
of wedging and glazing –
Oh, nothing was boring!
A standard II classroom
was used as our base
But soon it was found
There was just no more space.
For new, eager pupils
Arrived on the scenes.
The Standard II classroom walls
Burst at the seams.
So WHERE now to find
A place which accommodates
Such vast numbers
Of Pottery graduates?*



*We were far too cramped –
Now those are the facts.
WHO came to our aid?
Of course – MR. SAKS!
A headmaster's house
(In our grounds did it stand).
He kindly decided
to lend us a hand.
He allowed us to use
His official abode.
Whilst he moved his family
“Just down the road”.*

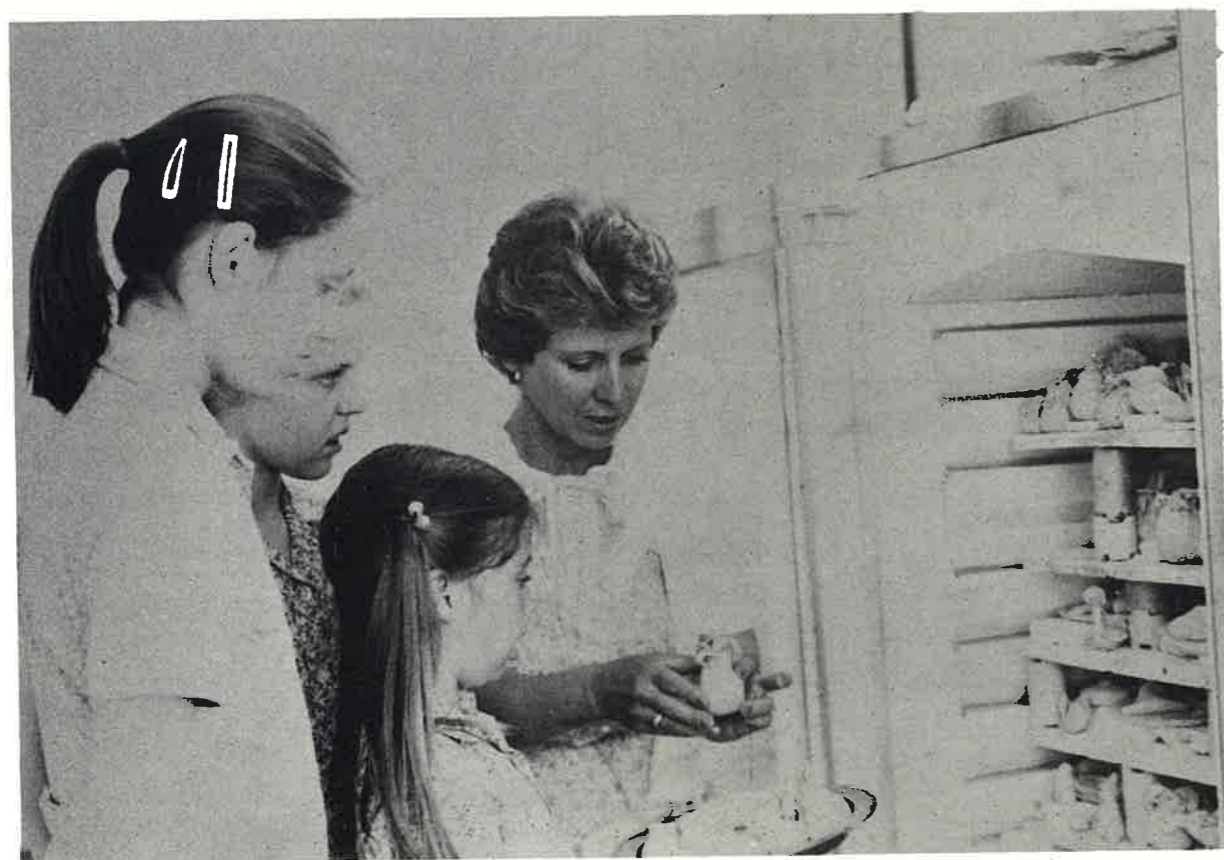
*Was it not to us amazing?
To have room to do our glazing
A room to work, a room to bisk,
And to the pupils no more risk
Of burns or painful, blistered hand
For in one room the kilns could stand.
From this day on the craft expanded.
With too much work were teachers landed.
Appeals for help were sent to others
And who responded?
OUR DEAR MOTHERS!
We bought a wheel, we now have three
And bigger kilns and more you'll see.
Enamelling we also do
And many crafts were added too.*



Clay on the ceiling . . .
 Clay on the floor . . .
 Clay on the windows . . .
 Clay on the door . . .
 Despite these pranks,
 Midst all this fun -
 We're proud to say
 Great work is done.

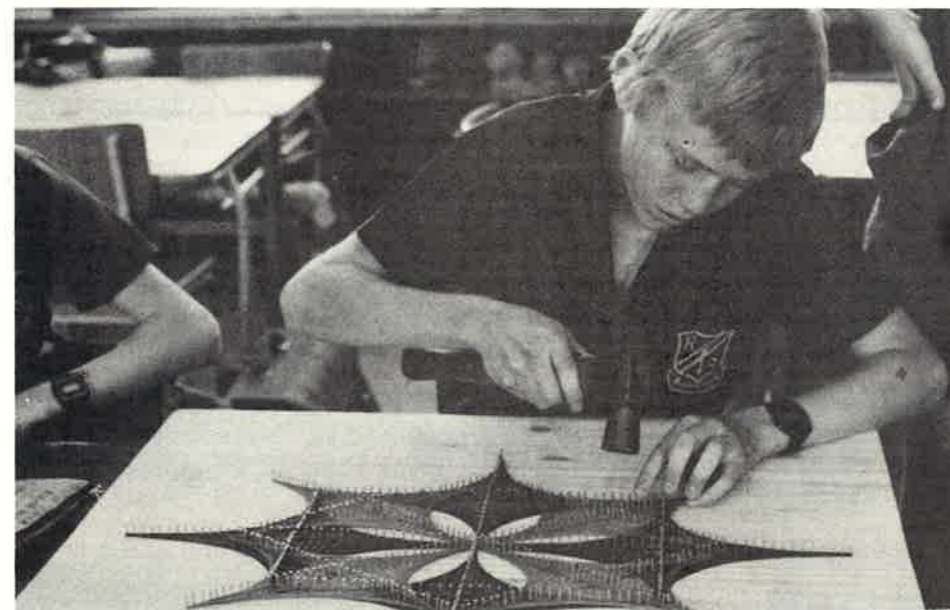


In true Rivonia School tradition,
 We held an Arts and Crafts exhibition.
 Our Pottery there made it's name
 From far and wide received acclaim
 From parents, press - who all admired
 Those articles well made and fired.
 So WHAT could more rewarding be
 Than taking part in POTTERY?



Rivonia at work





Dear Rivonia

Dear Rivonia,

Do you remember when the school had under two hundred pupils and we had no hall? Assembly was held in the open in front of the grades classrooms. All big school functions were held in the village hall and often a crocodile of children wound its way up the Main Road to practice for a concert or prize-giving.

Do you remember when we were a parallel-medium school? We spoke Afrikaans one week and English the next. Many children came from Leeukop on the bus so very few could stay for sport or any extra-mural activities. When the Afrikaans community left for Bryanston, we copied the folk of Grahamstown and presented them with a Bible for their new school.

Do you remember those first school journeys to Loskop Dam? After lights-out the staff would gather in the Supervisors flat and over a bottle or two of "snake bite remedy" talk until the early hours of the morning. And if you asked the girls what they enjoyed the most about the trip, they always answered, "the Volkspele".

Do you remember when the village was a very close-knit community and you knew your teachers equally well in and after school? They were family friends and you often called them by their first names.

Do you remember the year it snowed in Rivonia? The old buildings still stood where the hall is now and they looked like a Christmas card under their mantle of white. That was the year I tied Matthew Stubbs to a chair and each child in my class got a picture of Grade One in the snow.

Do you remember Jacob? He was the school cleaner and in the Summer brewed a very potent mixture in the coal house. During the morning he would nip in for a drink or two and then weave unsteadily up the road on his bike, to fetch the post. The coal house was eventually converted into the pavillion.

Do you remember when Mrs. Nel wore a certain orange dress and if you were in her class, you knew it was going to be one of those days. You thanked your lucky stars you had done your homework!! If you were in Grade One you were petrified of her and no one would take a message to her classroom, because someone once saw her shake a boy!

Do you remember when the P.T.A. ran a newspaper and the "Wednesday Mothers" worked hard at encouraging parents to participate in School activities? The food stall at Kyalami was a canvas cover held up by four poles and we were delighted with a profit of R1,500 made over two years. That same year we made R114,00 at our annual jumble sale!

Do you remember when the school committee organised a meeting each term? We covered a wide range of subjects with many guest speakers, including Peter Becker who was an old boy of the school.

Do you remember when we had exactly eleven boys in the Under 12's and Mr. Kreeve had to turn them all into soccer stars? And in 1969 the Under 10's won the local league and a delighted "Krivi" and supporters took them to St. George's Rosettenville to play against Marist Brothers, Linden.

Do you remember when building eventually began on the school hall? We started work on a production of "Pirates of Penzance" directed by Mrs. Smuts for the opening of the hall. Three bankrupt builders later the hall was still incomplete and "Pirates" over rehearsed. We then had a most successful run in the Sandown High School Hall. Our new hall was opened the following year with choir-singing and refreshments were served in a beautiful decorated marquee in the quadrangle.

Do you remember the prize-giving every year? We always sang Christmas Carols, ending with "We wish you a Merry Christmas" and every year the Std. V's would threaten to sing, "We wissssh you a Merry Chrissstmasssss" but they never let me down. However, the memory of that tense moment as the singing began is still very clear.

We were very lucky, all of us to be part of Rivonia Primary.

VAL. EVANS

Dear Sir,

I don't enjoy writing letters very much but I feel I need to write this one to thank you for all the things you have done for me during my stay at Rivonia. I am sure everyone else wants to do the same. At the Assembly you always had a new story to tell us and every single one was as exciting as all the rest. You have led Rivonia through thick and thin and made it an enjoyable school to be at. I have not been at the school since Grade One but I know that those who have, have grown from small tomatoes into big tomatoes and next year will shrink into small ones again. I've had many thrills and a few spills at Rivonia but I wish I was just starting again.

I hope the High School I go to will be at least half as good as here.

Yours faithfully

CHRISTOPHER PATTON

Std. 5b



Dear Mr. Saks,

As secretary of the Veteran's Netball Association, I feel that I must lodge a complaint about the way in which the match between staff and pupils was conducted.

We feel that the staff's choice of dress left much to be desired in terms of neatness and decorum and that their behaviour both on and off the field lacked discipline.

We refer in particular to two ladies, one of which you should be able to identify by her operatic voice and the other by her ungentlewomanly use of a feather duster.

At our last committee meeting the possibility of bringing your team before a disciplinary council was proposed, but in the light of the good natured sportmanship of your opponents, it was decided that we would on this occasion merely raise our objections and issue a motherly warning that next year we will be there again.

Spankingly yours

AMELIA HARRINGTON-PSMYTHE (Anna Kukuljevic 5b)

Newsletter: Extra-Ordinary

1982/02/25

Dear Parents,

The boot is on the other foot. I have always wanted to write rather than receive a letter of excuse.

So here goes . . .

Please excuse the grimy condition of your sons and daughters. They spent an hour helping the school move a load of bricks and accumulated a patina of dust in the process.

Love

RIVONIA PRIMARY

Special Food for Thought (with your Dusty Children in mind)

"Childhood is that wonderful time when all you need to do to lose weight is to take a bath".

E.M. SAKS
Headmaster



To Sir
I'm very sorry about shouting "We want break in the hall." I'm very sorry please forgive me
from Simon Hansen

To Mr Saks.

I am dreadfully sorry for doing such a mad thing in the hall - I really fell bad about what I did but I am shaw I won't do such a mad thing again and I will count to ten before I talk again and I do hope I'll be aloud to stay at this lovely school.

Your Sincerely
Colin Alexander

20, Scaffel Road,
FLORA CLIFF
Florida

24th September, 1983

The Headmaster
Rivonia School
Rivonia

Dear Sir,

It is with great joy and fond memories that I recall the 10 fulfilling years spent at Rivonia Primary School. I began teaching at Rivonia in 1927 and remained on the staff until 1937.

My pupils came from the surrounding Poultry and fruit farms. Some children walked as much as 3 miles to attend school often accompanied only by a dog. This dog would usually wait around until the school day ended and would then accompany the children home.

In the event of rain, school would close early because many children would have to cross the river before the storm broke. On returning home each afternoon the children had their own chores, which included selling flowers, fruit and vegetables at a farm stall as well as doing odd household jobs.

The children were delightful to teach and some have become well-known South Africans. Dr. Peter Becker who is an acknowledged expert on local African Customs was a pupil at Rivonia Primary School.

I was the class teacher of 16 English Speaking children who ranged from Grade 1 to Std. 5. I first began teaching in the Church hall and when the school was built we moved into a new classroom. This was a great joy and adventure as we now had our own room.

Our only aids were blackboard, jotters, pens and ink. Chalk was often difficult to obtain and so had to be used with care. At first there was no luxury as a school bell and we had to call the children to order by clapping our hands. We then acquired a school hand-bell which rang for recesses and home-time.

I taught Music and we enjoyed a couple of Concerts which proved most successful and well worth the effort and hardwork. The children enjoyed participating in these events and always gave of their best.

Our yearly sports consisted of Tug-of-War, Netball, Skipping and Various games like kennetjie and five stones.

One exciting and adventurous event was a school tour of Lourenço Marques. We camped on the beach in tents and went for many beach-combing walks collecting odds and ends for our "treasure trove". On our return to school our treasures were discussed and displayed for all to view.

Our staff consisted of two teachers:- Miss Jacobs, Miss C. O'Hare (myself) and our wonderful headmaster, Mr. Stopforth. Because of our minute staff we soon built up a deep and sound friendship and often picnicked together at Leeukop.

These were indeed memorable years and ones which I shall hold dear to my heart forever.

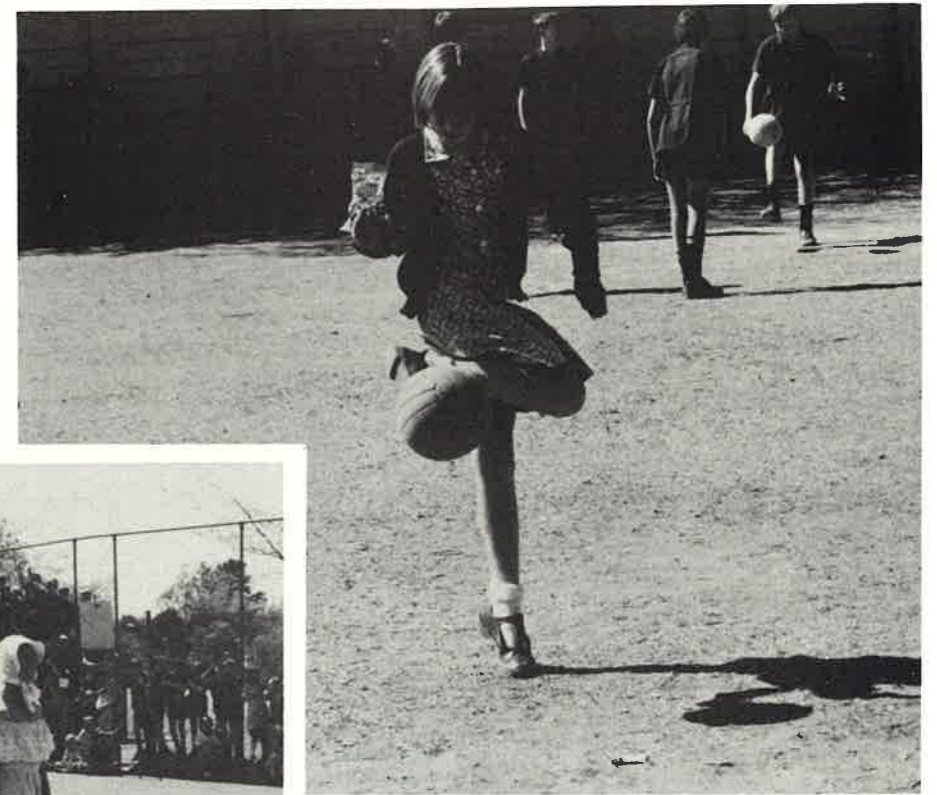
May I take this opportunity of wishing the present staff and children of Rivonia Primary School every success and happiness for the future. May the years you spend there be as fruitful, happy and memorable as mine were.

Yours faithfully,

CATHERINE B. BAKKER (nee O'Hare)

Candid Rivonia





Early Educational Tours

by Anne-Marie Nel

Between 1945 — 1967 Protea Camps and Trips was established to promote sound relationships between English and Afrikaans sections of the school which was then parallel-medium.

It was a teacher-parent venture run by the Daitz, Evans and Nel families. The camps on the formal side covered ecology, geology, biology, history, geography, art and folk dancing and took months of preparation of lectures, stories, visits to sites and touring arrangements.

Part of the fun was the informal aspects of our education which occurred. On the trip to Hluhluwe Mrs. Evans and a group of Std. V's were chased by a black rhino which was in transit to another camp and which the local ranger did not know was there. Mrs. Evans who is short and plump won the race to the landrover!

On the trip back from Richard's Bay, the morning of departure was inauspicious. The heavens opened up. On the night before, Mr. Geertsema, the Principal, was taking the evening Bible reading around the campfire. The verses dealt with the wrath of God and an oncoming storm. We heard it coming through the palms and trees before he did, and to his amazement we had scattered. At 4 a.m. we were wandering around in the

dark, breaking camp. Mrs. Howell insisted that each child have a cup of hot soup before leaving. Unbeknown to her, the soup had been emptied and the container filled with water and brillo pads. In the half-dark most children had a good and awakening mouthful!

When we reached Durban, we had been accidentally booked on a train leaving 2 hours earlier than arranged. The loudspeakers started calling the Rivonia group to entrain while they were in the toilets or scattered along the sharply curved platform. Children, baggage, recording and camping equipment were hurled onto the train by three harrassed staff-members, and the staff of the dining saloon who piled out to help us. I rushed up the platform to the controller near the unit who already had the green flag unfurled. I ended up yelling at him that express train or not, he couldn't let the train go, as we didn't know if all our small ones were aboard yet. At that stage I grabbed the green flag and the platform manager arrived, calmed me down, relieved me of the green flag instead of arresting me, delayed the train until we had checked and sent us off five minutes late, in a packed unsorted jumble of children and baggage, but all in one piece.

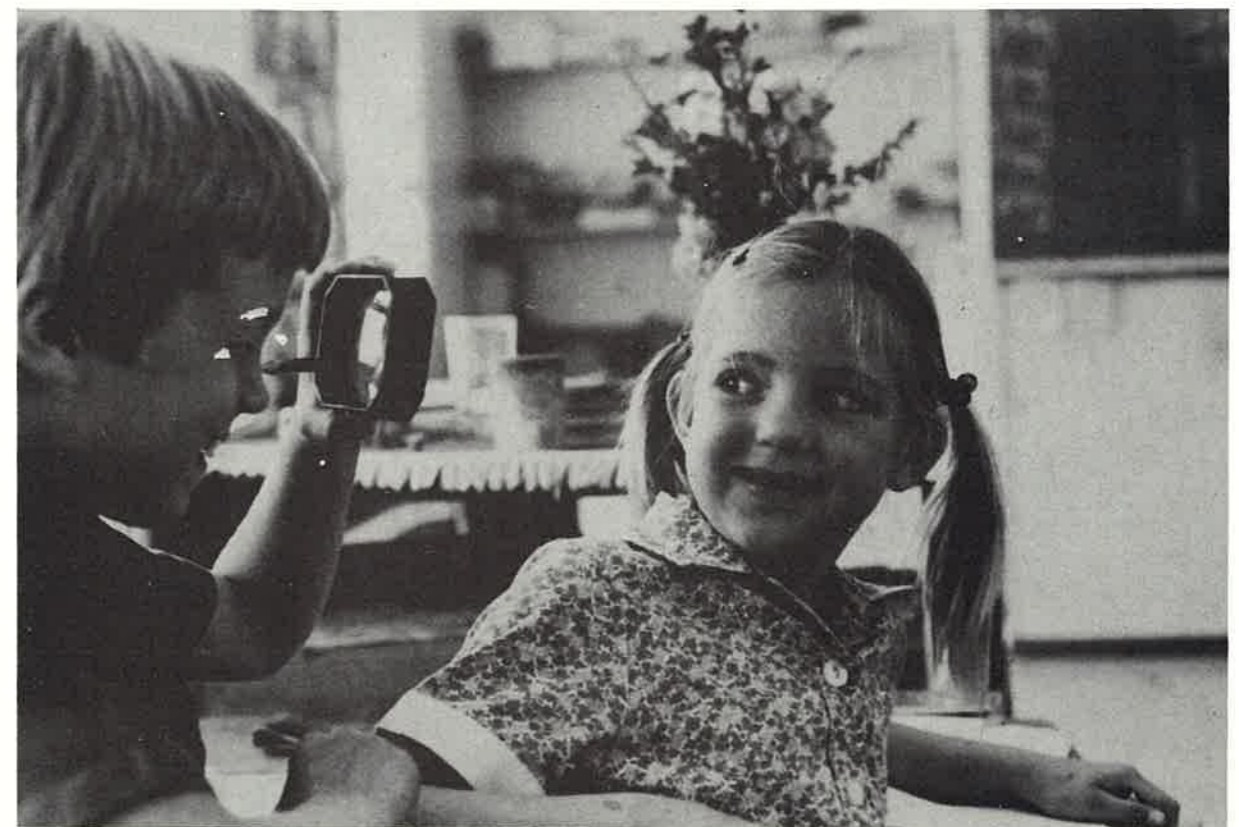
On a trip to Loskop, we had a relieving teacher with us, who had only just arrived at the school and was an unknown quantity. As part of the study of the indigenous bush, the children were asked to collect leaf specimens.

One of the Leeukop children went up to him, to ask what a particular leaf was. He grabbed the child by the back of the collar and the seat of his pants and pitched him into the thorn bush, saying "Dis 'n wag-'n-bietjie blaar!!".

I took a group at Rietfontein on a botany trail and found a bush I knew well. It is beautiful but has the most foul smell if the leaves are rubbed. I got the group each to carefully pick a couple of leaves and told them to hold them gently between their hands. After I had positioned them in a group and got myself on the pathway to the camp, I told them to rub the leaves vigorously. As I did so, I started running. Within seconds I was being pursued by a group of yelling vengeance-bent pupils.

Education is fun!!

More Candid Rivonia





More Log Book Extracts

March, 26th, 1912.

On 20th inst. I discovered in the boys' W.C. most vulgar, impure & filthy words written. I at once investigated the matter but to no effect, however, I confidentially put two boys on the watch to find out, if possible, the writer of such horrid filth.

Hail Storm

31st Jan. 1913.

On Monday 27th a storm unexpectedly came up from the direction of Kooxaport.

Repeated flashes of lightning accompanied by bursts of roaring thunder, caused the rain to pour down, which was first mingled with small pellets of hail. This grew thicker and thicker, pellets increasing to about one inch in diameter, and being driven by a terrific wind, caused destruction on its entire course. The falling of hail lasted for fifteen minutes, and then the ground was covered with hail to an average thickness of two inches. Our chairman, Mr. Manson and many farmers sustained severe losses.

The rivers were in full flood. The storm followed a north-easterly course, between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The lightning also struck a bullock on Sir Thomas Cullinan's farm hard by.

W.D. Stafford
Principal

18th Nov. Spanish Influenza!

By order of the School Committee the school had been closed from Monday, 14th Oct. until further notice from the Department. Notice was given through the Newspapers, and schools reopened on Monday 18th November. Twenty-nine out of 53 pupils were present. Only 15 out of 53 pupils suffered from the disease, and through God's grace, no deaths.

was in charge of a Sub-Depot for free medicines, which were distributed. I treated 50 natives and 14 whites. The worst cases were found among the former. In one family of eleven members, only the old father was able to minister to their needs. The first supply was taken to them, and they were shown how to take the different mixtures. After this first visit they would come to the school for fresh supplies and also report on the progress of their sick. It was quite an experience. What a glorious thing to be able to assist in the alleviation of suffering!

God! spare us another such a visitation!
But, they will be done!

17th Aug. Corporal Punishment. Hercules Cramer, aged 12 received 20 cuts over the back, with strap, for misconduct under prayers and obstinacy.

Parents Teachers Association



1983 P.T.A. members hard at work sorting raffle tickets.

Rivonia is blessed with an active Parent Teachers Association, whose function is not only as a fund-raising body but as a service and social organisation as well.

Through the years parents have contributed massively in time, effort and in cash to the School.

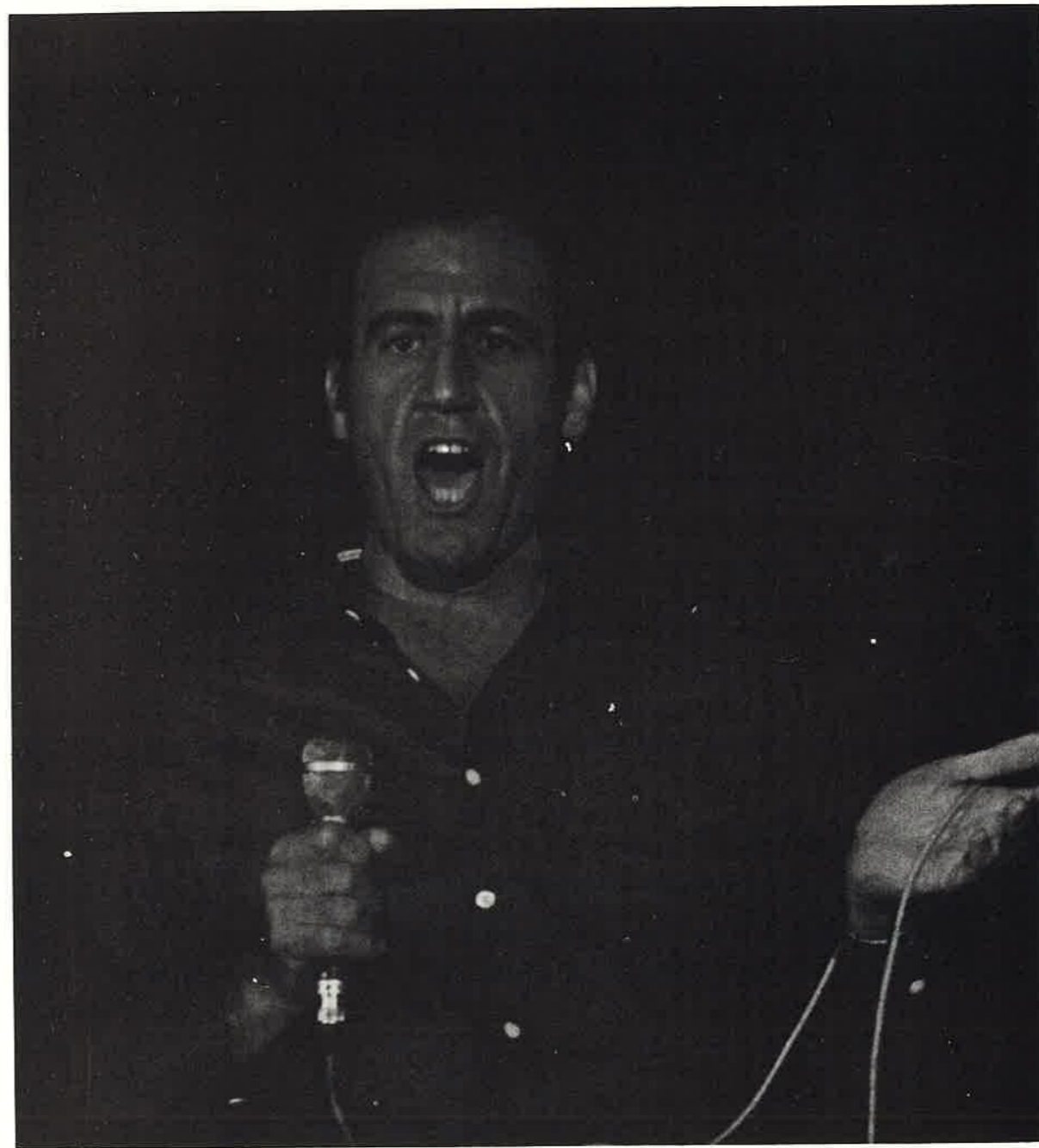
Over the past 10 years, in excess of a half a million rands have been pumped into the School, a noteworthy achievement indeed.

*Winston Churchill said:
"We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give".
Our parents are living witnesses to this philosophy.*

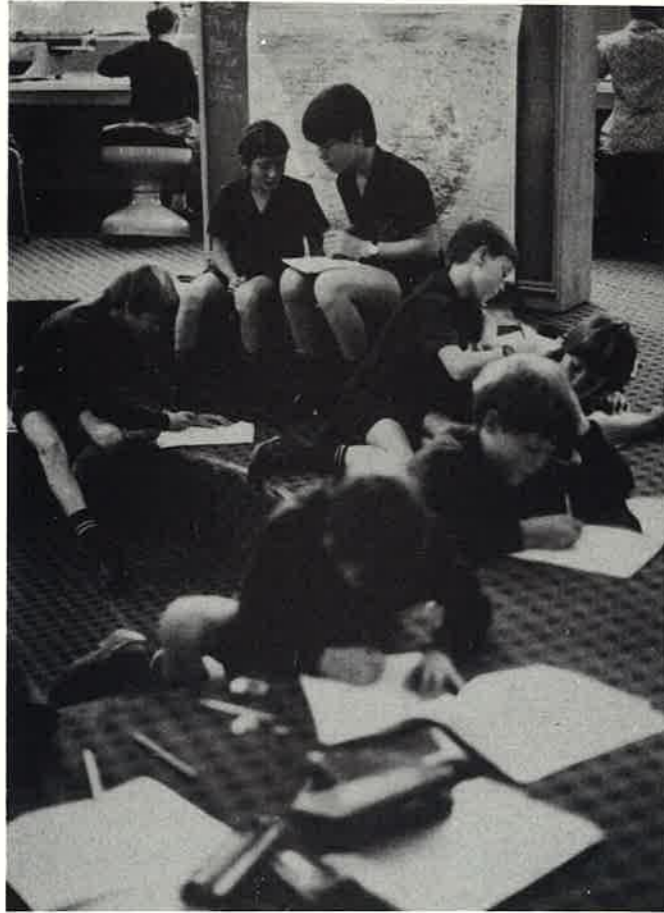
Fund-raising activities ranged from koeksister bak to big walks, fetes and music hall productions.

The following pictures of our parents in action were taken during a successful season of the Rivonia Music Hall which took place over 8 years ago, and raised a record sum of money.





Media Centre



In 1977 our school felt that the next project for the P.T.A. should be purely an academic one and a Media Centre was decided on.

WHY A MEDIA CENTRE?

With the ever-increasing technological sophistication of our age, it is essential to expose children to all forms of modern media. With the knowledge explosion the skill needed for self-study are of paramount importance in education.

HOW WE WENT ABOUT IT

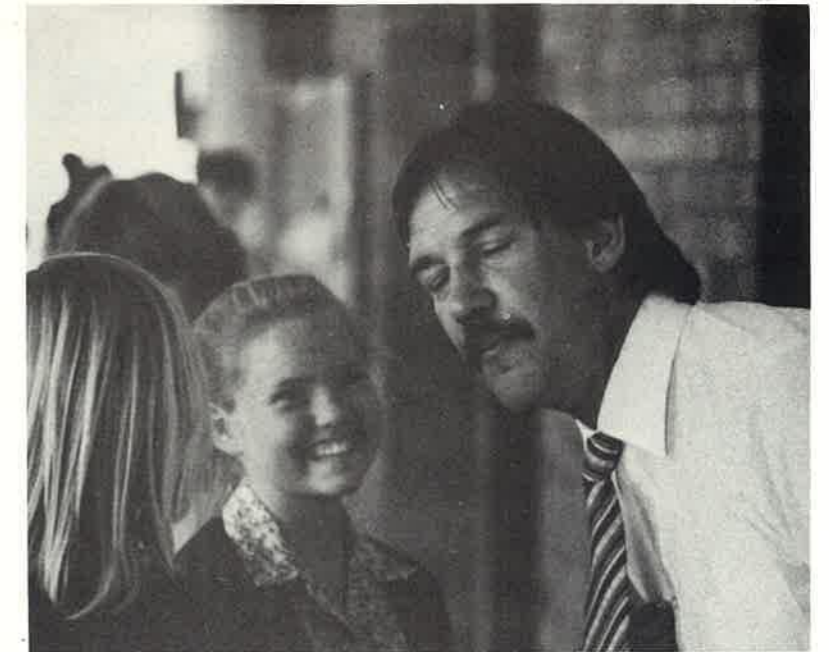
The first requirement was to expand the accommodation of the existing school library. For this a daunting sum of money was required. Incredibly, through the enthusiasm of an able Parent Teachers Association, the bulk of the money was raised in one year — and building began.

The hard work, the noise and dust, the lessons taken on the soccer field were all worth it. Rivonia School opened the first media centre in the Transvaal in June 1978. Since then it has been visited and admired by hundreds of schools, librarians and students.

No longer do we have the hushed silence of the old library. Four to five classes can be accommodated at once. Over nine hundred children have a set lesson once a week and may arrange extra times to do research work, watch filmstrips or slides in the attached audio-visual room, to do group work, watch a video cassette or listen to a story in the intimacy of the reading well. Centrally classified and controlled tape recorders, record players, language masters and a speed reading machine are issued to classrooms as well as transparencies, pictures, charts and articles, cassettes, records and duplicating masters.

During breaks and after school the Media Centre is open for individual use, and groups of small children can be seen sitting with fierce concentration, silently listening to taped stories through earphones. It is particularly popular on cold days. No doubt the excellent heating system has much to do with this.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?



The Media Centre has already run out of space. The corridor along-side could be turned into a much-needed "production room" where both teachers and pupils could make their own transparencies and slide-tape programs. We have designs on the classroom next door which could include a bright happy junior section to entice the little ones into reading. A separate video room will become necessary with the increasing availability of suitable cassettes and surely, in the not-too-distant

future computers will be a daily part of all our lives. Even Grade I's handle modern equipment with greater proficiency and self-confidence than many staff members! When we see the enthusiasm and the purposeful air of children coming in to actively teach themselves, we think we are succeeding in narrowing the gap between school "spoon-feeding" and the self-sufficiency required for tertiary education. Besides school is far more fun than it used to be.



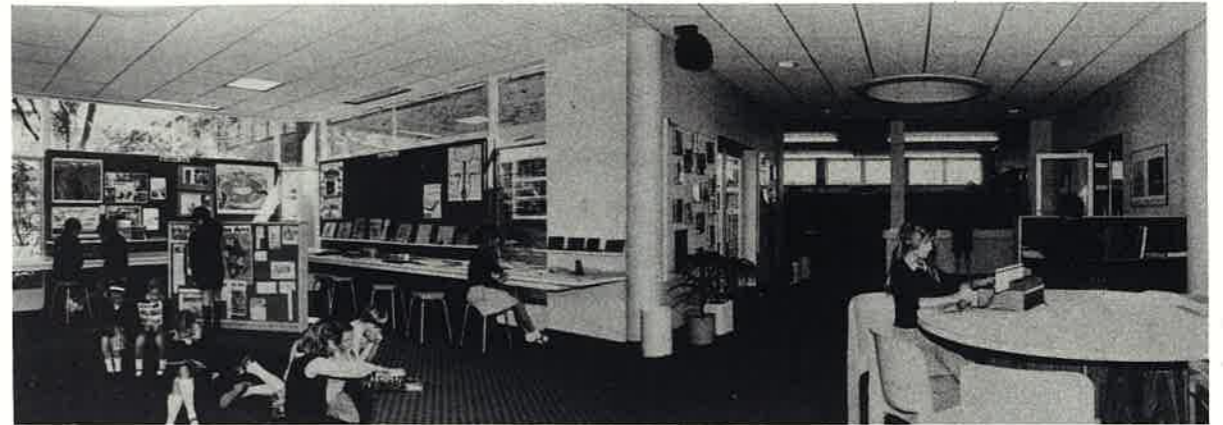
The media



centre



at



work



Drought 1983

This year, as you all know, South Africa has been in the grip of the worst drought for over 200 years.



In order to save our gardens the children and their teachers devised a scheme whereby each child brought a litre of bath water to school and poured it on his or her favourite plant.



I am glad to report that Operation Save Rivonia's Garden was a success and that the lovely School garden is still there to delight the eye and charm the soul.



Interschools Athletics

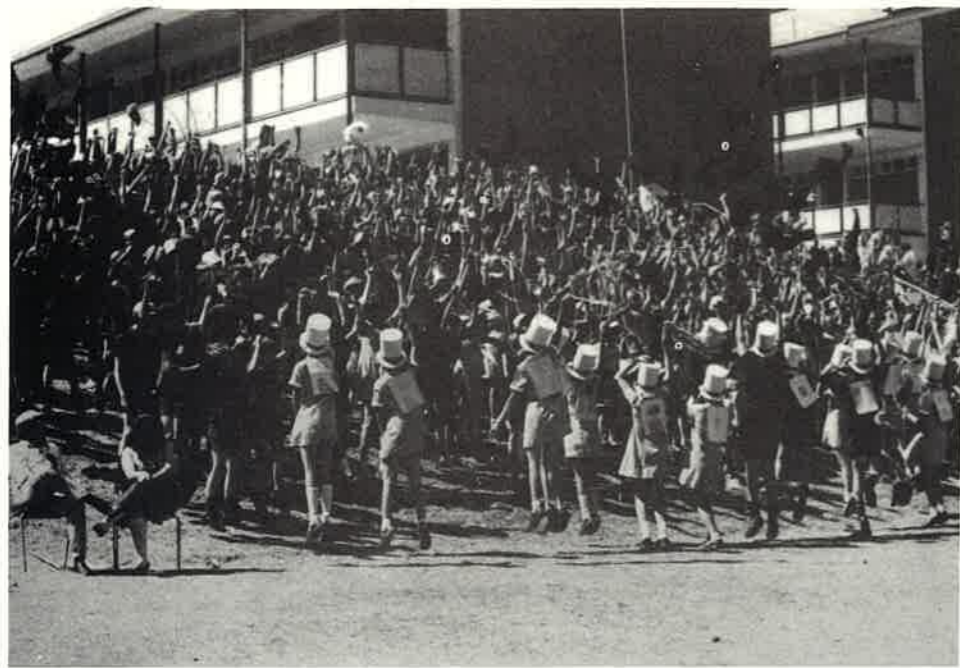


Our Interschools Athletics Competition has its beginnings in the early '30's. In those days and until recently, the competition was called the Smaller Primary Schools Athletics Competition. The participating schools were then Halfway House, Chloorkop, Olifantsfontein and Rivonia.



Today Rivonia and Halfway House Primary have been joined by Montrose, Bryandale and Wendywood Primary. Once a year they join in "battle" to see which school will be king for a year.





This year, after fierce competition, our Athletes won by the narrowest of margins, giving our School a tenth win in a row.



A unique and perhaps fitting prestige for our 80th birthday.

An experience I'll never forget.

I remember in Grade One we were given small maths books with exercises, one being to colour in seven peas out of ten. After realizing that I had coloured in one too many, I tried to rub it out, licking my rubber to help it a bit. To my horror a large hole appeared where a pea had once been. Hurriedly, I turned over the page and carried on working. Later, after standing in a queue to have my book marked, the teacher discovered it. She was furious and started vigorously hitting my leg. In her rage she missed and hit her own leg! I didn't think it was funny then.

Alex ~~McG~~ McLaughlin 5 B.

My most embarrassing day

It all started on the day of prize-giving. I was in Grade One. We were lead into the hall and told to sit down quickly. My name was called out for a prize. Proud little me walked onto the stage without noticing my dress was half-way up my bottom. Everybody burst into peals of helpless laughter. Hearing this I gathered up all my courage and slowly looked down to see what was so funny. Catching sight of a pair of frilly pink knickers I hurriedly pulled my dress below my knees. Grabbing my prize I rushed off the stage in a flush of embarrassment. Later, at home I was told I looked like an over ripe tomato.

Jennifer O'Riley 5c.

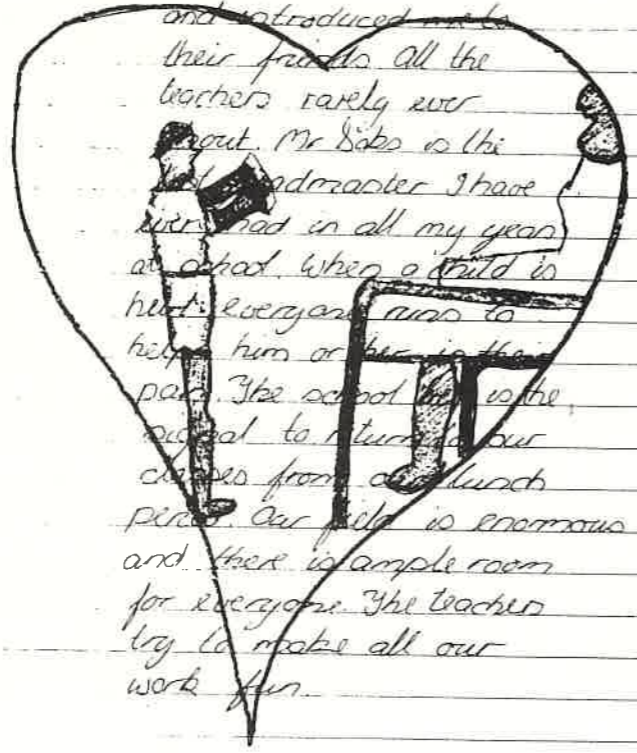
My Happiest Day

The day finally arrived and I trotted off to school. I was dawning in my school dress and my shoes were giving me blisters. A beautiful, young lady showed us inside a huge classroom with desks and chairs. My name was on a lovely pink card which was pinned to my enormous dress. We were given colouring-in books and crayons and at first break I explored the grounds. When the time came to go home I burst into tears! The day was over so quickly. My mother told me that tomorrow was another day and indeed it was!

Nicola Cuts

Why I love Rivonia

The pupils of Rivonia are very understanding. On my first day they all showed me around and introduced me to their friends. All the teachers rarely ever shout. Mr Saks is the best headmaster I have ever had in all my years at school. When a child is hurt everyone runs to help him or her in their pain. The school is the biggest to return our clothes from our lunch pails. Our field is enormous and there is ample room for everyone. The teachers try to make all our work fun.



Anthony Mills

A Terrifying Experience

It was a normal school day for a tiny little boy (me) in Std 1. This particular day was a Thursday, assembly day. The "in-thing" to do was to open and close the doors of the hall. A group of friends and I rushed to the hall, grabbed the doors and opened them. Then we all went to our chairs and stood beside them, not daring to open our mouths because MR SAKS had entered the hall. He told his story and then just as he was leaving he said, "I would like to see Anthony Mills in my office please." My hair slowly started to rise and my heart started to sink. The blood rushed to my face. It seemed like as if the whole school was looking at me. I went to Sir's office, after deciding that running away wasn't a very good solution. I did not find myself in deep trouble as I expected but I left the office with a sweat. I had been absent the day before when I had earned a good work stamp.



Mrs. A. Freemantle (Letty)

The Rivonia I Remember

by Mrs. Freemantle (Letty)

We came to Rivonia during the War when the earliest directions from Town were "Get on to Oxford Road travelling North and just stay on the tar".

Rivonia was a rural village supported by a rural community. How can one best describe the living conditions? Our home was built of Kimberley Brick which is basically mud, under corrugated iron. All the households were dependant upon rain water, boreholes or wells for the water supply, reticulated water was only laid on in 1954. The telephone exchange was manually operated. Most households had a cow and the pavements and numerous vacant properties provided adequate grazing.

Our properties were only rated for the first time in 1949 at 2½d in the pound of land value and land values were not much more than £50 per acre.

When I joined the Staff of Rivonia Primary School, I taught the class which consisted of Standard 1, 2 and 3 in both English and Afrikaans Medium. At that stage the entire school was made up of only three classes — the grades under Mrs. Antionette Wilson, my class and the Standard 4's and 5's. The Senior class was taught by Mr. H.A. Coetzee, the Headmaster.



Plaque commemorating the 50th anniversary of the school.

He was a respected leader of the community and it was therefore natural that he was chosen as the leader of the group of men who formed a Rivonia Commando which rode on horseback, leaving before dawn, to arrive at the Voortrekker Monument for the celebrations at its opening. For the occasion our Headmaster and various men of the community grew great beards and dressed in the traditional hat, corduroy trousers and veldskoene of a Boer Commando. Amid a rousing send off, the high spirited little group rode North from the school early that morning. A different mood hung over them when

they finally arrived at the Monument some saddle-sore hours later. None of them being men who had lived in the saddle, they all, and particularly our intrepid Headmaster, suffered badly from chafing. A rather stiff gait was adopted for walking for days afterwards.

Being a teacher and later the acting Principal of Rivonia Primary School in a small community meant that all and sundry expected you to be a walking encyclopedia. I fondly remember how I would be phoned at all hours and was expected to know and answer any general knowledge query.



Fund raising big walk held at Kyalami track in 1970. Mr. Kreeve in "drag".

Fund raising then was conducted at a much lower key than you at Rivonia do today. One thing that has not changed however, is the enthusiasm and support of the parents. We had an annual Tickey and Braaivleis — this function was something of a Fête with the emphasis on food and where possible the price per portion was not more than a tickey.

Our children were drawn from a wide area and vastly divergent social backgrounds. Our area extended from about where Sandton City is today in the South, to

Halfway House in the North.

I do not recall if it was economic necessity which dictated that the children were not obliged to wear shoes to school, but I do know that to ensure that each child received an adequate, balanced daily diet, milk in Summer and soup in Winter were distributed at the school during the first Break.

I have many fond memories of Rivonia School and take this opportunity of congratulating you on your 80th Anniversary and extend to you all my very best wishes.

The Rivonia Treasure Box

by Lauren Bennie

The golden memories lie about,
While the silver laughter gleams,
The emeralds glisten of happy days,
Of Rivonia — a school filled with dreams.

The Headmaster, the Pupils,
The teachers young and old,
The stories of it's history
Are all left to be told.

There are classrooms and offices,
A science lab and a hall,
Lots of other places and things
I shall recall.

My Years at Rivonia

by Rachel Goodborn

Three years have flown away
Not a bad word have I to say,
We've had lots of fun and many laughs
Now is the time to tread new paths.

We're not always good, we're not always bad
But when we leave we're bound to be sad;
Rivonia days are days to treasure,
Not only today, but always and ever.

Memory Lane

by Debbie Thomson

I looked at my reflection with joy and pride
My nervousness hidden deep inside
Is that really me in that blue flowered dress
I think it is — Oh Yes! Oh Yes!
My confidence waned as it was time to go
What would it be like, I did not know
Not realising it but I was opening the door to memory lane.
When I opened the car-door, so nervous, things were the same.
My first day at school was by biggest memory of all.
The older ones were so big and tall
But as the years went by
Std. II was at my door
And I was a junior no more.
My memories expanded, my memories grew
I had happy ones and sad ones too,
But those are not now and those are no more
For Std. V is at my door.
But Std. V is not all fun and play
You have to work hard every day,
But come rain or shine, hail or snow,
My Rivonia memories will never go.

An Ode to Rivonia

by Debbie Thomson

R is for Rivonia, the school that beats all.
In sports and academics we stand tall.

I is for integrity we learn from our head
With love and respect we are there to be led.

V is for victory, for which we all strive
To do our best with will and drive.

O is or octogenarian our school has achieved that
And proud we are of that historical fact.

N is for now, the time for celebrations
We're 80 years old, congratulations.

I is for Inter-schools of which we're the best
We've won ten years running with gusto and zest.

A is for always our hearts will be full
of memories and love for this wonderful school . . .

RIVONIA!

DOWN MEMORY LANE

by Greg Scott-Brown

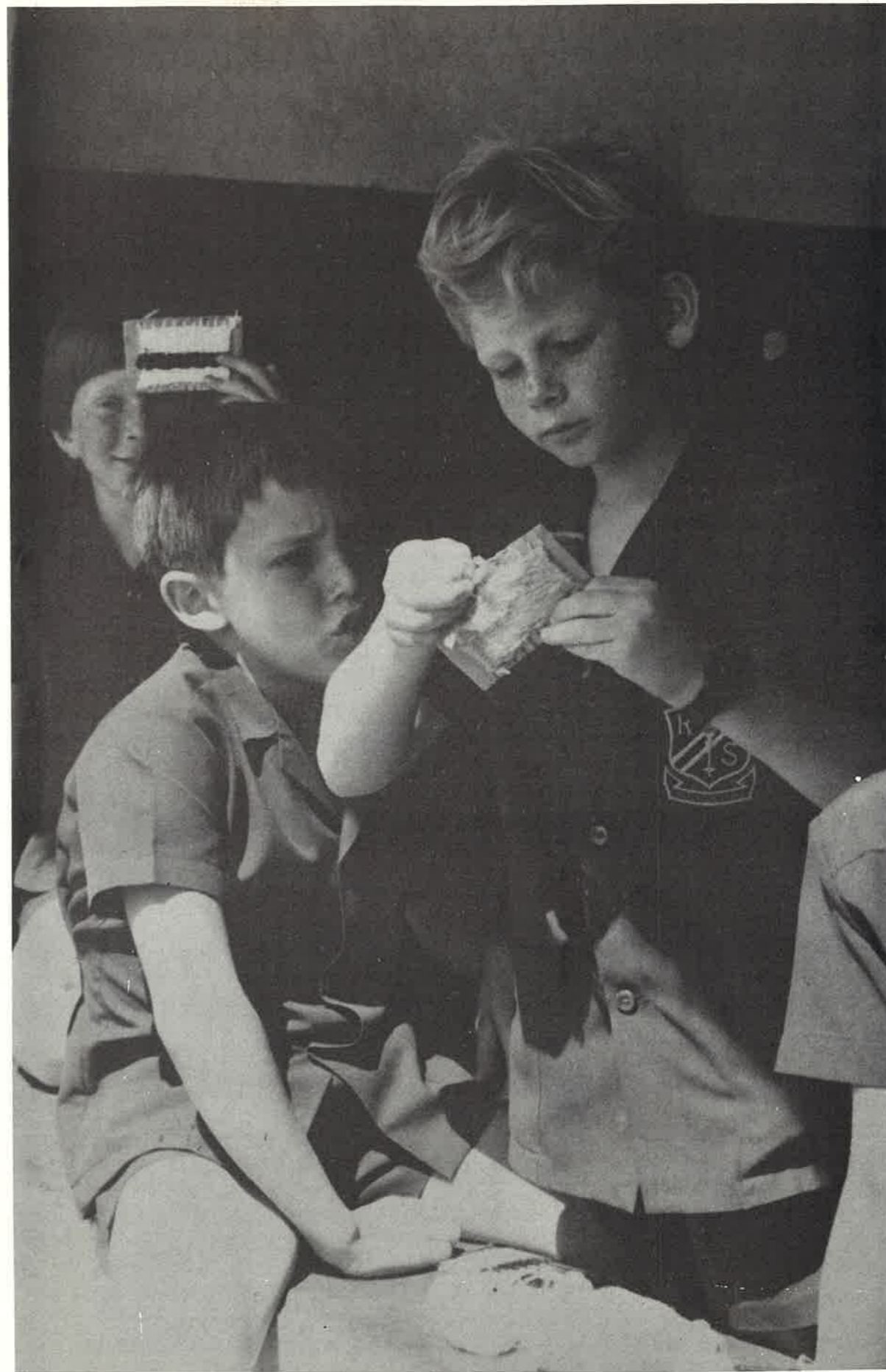
Years have come and years have past
Everyone has tried to do their task
Many memories will always stay
Of the friends with whom I play.
Our Cape Town trip was the most
With Mr. Sloan as our host.
Miss K was there to add to the fun
With swimming and surfing in the sun.
Who can forget our super plays
With Mrs. Pincus and all she says.
But the best memories of all
Was soccer, cricket and tennis galore.
A win or a draw — a six or a four
It didn't matter we still enjoyed them all.



Still more



candid
Rivonia





A Parents Prayer

Make me a better parent, teach me to understand my children,
To listen carefully to what they have to say and to
answer to all their questions kindly.

Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me
Forbid that I should laugh at their mistakes or resort to
shame and ridicule as punishment.

Let me not tempt my child to lie.
Guide me hour by hour that I may demonstrate by all
I say and do that honesty produces happiness.

Reduce I pray the meanness in me.
May I cease to nag and when I am out of sorts help me to hold my tongue.

Blind me to the little errors of my children
and help me to see the good things they do.

Give me a ready word of praise.
Help me to grow up with my children and treat them as would those at their own age,
but let me not exact of them the judgement and conventions of adults.

Allow me not to rob them of the opportunity to wait upon
themselves, to think, to choose and to make decisions.

Forbid that I should ever punish them for my selfish
satisfaction, may I grant them all their wishes that are reasonable and have the courage
always to withhold a privilege that will do them harm.

Make me so fair and just, so considerate and companionable
to my children that they will have a
genuine esteem for me.

Fit me to be loved and imitated.
Give me calm, poise and self-control.

Author: Unknown



Thanks:

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commemorative magazine.

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Mr. Murray Meikle for "Schoolboy memories of Rivonia"

Mrs. J. Wheeler for her article on "Pottery"

Mrs. J. Reed for her thoughts on the "Media Centre"

Mrs. C. Bakker for her recollections.

Mrs. A. Freemantle for sharing her memories of Rivonia with us.

A word of thanks to Matthew Stubbs, a member of staff at Rivonia,
for his many and delightful photographs.

E.M. SAKS
Headmaster

