

# Celebrating 100 Years of Heritage



LIGGINS HOUSE - REDLANDS

Platinum Luncheon 2023  
Wednesday 3 May

# The Liggins Building

The Liggins Building, originally known as “Liggins House” has been an anchor for Redlands, dating back to its launch in 1923, and living on in the memories of every living Redlander. Here is just a small glimpse into its fascinating history and cherished place within Redlands’ community.

A treasure trove of memories, the Liggins Building celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, linking 100 years of Redlanders, through many generations, and to our current students today.

The Liggins Building opened on 9 May 1923 in honour of Redlands’ co-founder **Miss Elizabeth Liggins**. First a boarding house, then kitchen, art room, laboratory, and pottery workshop, and during WWII it even housed the School’s bomb shelter. It is currently home to our vibrant Languages classrooms and Staff Common Room.

Then Principal, **Miss Amy Roseby**, named the new building for Redlands’ co-founder **Miss Elizabeth Liggins** and it was planned to house the majority of the boarders upstairs, along with the house mistresses, and the Junior School downstairs.

Ahead of its time in design and conceptualisation, the downstairs of Liggins House had dividing doors that opened to provide a much larger space, giving it the flexibility to be used for smaller classrooms, but also for concerts, plays, recitals and even dances.

Upstairs was also a large open room for the boarders, with smaller bedrooms for residential staff. Unusually, the boarders’ beds were not arranged inside like a regular dormitory, but end to end on the balcony. Each boarder had an individual changing cubicle with a chest of drawers and vanity.

**Alison Hattersley (RL 1926)** after whom the adjoining tennis court was named, remembers the entire school writing their names on a document that was buried under the doorstep at the time of construction.

In 1934, Redlands’ Jubilee Fete and other Redlands fundraisers coordinated by the Old Girls’ Union, paid for two downstairs classrooms at the southern end of Liggins House to be converted into a fully operational kitchen for use by the students and residential staff, in anticipation of the loss of the kitchen in Redlands House.

Headmistress **Mrs Isobel Humphery (1946 – 1973)** later reported in 1968 that this room “was once a kitchen, then a staffroom, then art room, then laboratory, now an art room again”, and then by the late 1960s, it was a pottery shop “with electric kiln and two potters’ wheels”.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, it was recommended that independent schools located around the harbour evacuate their boarders to the country, commencing in early 1942. Remembering the expense of their 1919 evacuation during WWI, coupled with dwindling boarding numbers, Principal Roseby made the decision to discontinue boarding at Redlands.

The dormitories and accommodation for housemistresses were to be converted to classrooms. A legacy of that time remains: the bomb shelter, accessible through a small door still visible on the northern side of the Liggins Building. As there were no boarders on the night of 31 May 1942 when the Japanese midget submarines penetrated Sydney Harbour, there is no record of the bomb shelter ever being used. However, Redlands’ last boarders do remember watching from the balcony as search lights combed the night sky for enemy aircraft.

**Gergaynia Shelley (nee Beckett) (RL 1957)**, remembers senior biology classes downstairs in the Science Lab, which finally moved to a more modern laboratory in the Mowll Building in 1958.

In 1988, when the Lang Gymnasium opened, replacing the “Staff Cottage” on the corner of Gerard Street and Waters Road, the Liggins Building became the home of a staffroom, which remains there today (now known as the Staff Common Room), along with language classrooms.

*Thank you to everyone who joined us today for this year’s Platinum Luncheon, and to those who shared their memories of the Liggins Buildings. We look forward to seeing you again next year!*

# The Liggins Building from Inception to Today



The Beginning Liggins Building Under Construction, 1922



100 Years Later Rock in the Quad, 2022

Front Cover: Simon Fieldhouse, *Liggins Building*, 1973, Watercolour  
Donated by the Class of 1973 at their 40th School Reunion

# Memories of the Liggins Building

Trish Rogers (Roache)  
Redlander, 1955

Redlands assemblies were held on the ground floor of Liggins House. Sometimes we would smooth out foil chocolate wrappers to keep in our prayer books and swap with one another.

The small biology lab was entered by an outside door on the southern end of the building. With deputy-head Miss Jessie Steel we only studied rats, not human behaviour!

4th Class juniors were in a ground floor room near the staircase. Upstairs were 3 classrooms with folding doors to make a larger room. Here we were taught English and Modern History by Mrs. Winter, Geography by Misses Heath and Kernot, Maths by Mrs. Burnett, Latin by Miss Fitzpatrick and French by Miss Polak and later Mrs. Pile.

In 4th and 5th Forms "Fitzie" taught Latin and English in a downstairs room near the assembly hall. Upstairs Miss Kernot also took Ancient History.

Enjoyable physical culture lessons with Mr Bjelke Petersen were held in the assembly hall. They were a welcome break from the usual routine.



Assembly, Class of 1955

Choir was taken by Miss Ives and art classes by Miss Tindale. During recess and lunch breaks pupils hit tennis balls against the outside walls of the Liggins Building. Almost adjacent was the tuckshop run by Mrs Allworth.

In the assembly hall we were taught ballroom dancing by Miss Ryrie before a visit by Knox Grammar boys. We learned to waltz, quickstep and foxtrot and to do The Pride of Erin. At the end of 1st Form we had our initial school "formal" in Liggins. There was a light at each end of the hall. The naughty boys kept turning the lights off at one end, so stern Miss Steel frantically turned them on again at the other.

So, the Liggins Building, was a very busy place of learning.



Trish Rogers, Redlander 1955

## Margaret Jones (Butcher) Redlander, 1955

I came to Redlands in 5th class in 1949. I remember our classrooms on the ground floor of the Liggins Building, desks with opening "lids" and where Junior School classes were separated by large folding doors. These could be opened to provide the "Hall" where a shortened form of Morning Prayer was conducted each day, Book of Common Prayer and Hymns Ancient and Modern, either by the gentle Rev Felton, or Rev Kenderdine, the more forceful ("every head bowed and every eye closed!") Rev. Setchell, the Headmistress Mrs Humphery or the Deputy Headmistress, Miss Steele.

Since the junior girls sat on the floor, we became familiar with splinters from the wooden, and probably waxed, 1923 floorboards, and learned to be careful.

"Collecting" was popular with girls in the late 1940's. Looking back I can't understand this particular activity. Secreted in some of our Books of Common Prayer were small rectangular pieces of coloured foil. The commonest source of these treasures was "Columbines", delicious chewy caramels, no doubt disastrous for teeth, which were wrapped in thin paper and pink, blue or silver foil. Once unwrapped the foil was spread out and wrinkles removed with careful rubbing. Unfortunately, they were light and fragile. On many occasions these treasures were discovered by a teacher when the book was dropped or opened accidentally or carelessly

during the service. It was a crime to use your Prayer Book for the purpose of trading one's favourite coloured "silver paper" with a neighbour, but a popular past time. It attracted suitable punishment when discovered.

Here in Assembly the practice of seasonally checking the hem length of our three pleat tunics was carried out. One's tunic should just touch the floor when kneeling upright. Fortunately, the dictates of fashion did not then influence the length of tunics nearly as much as nowadays, but growth spurts did and occasionally a child was sent home with a note suggesting it was time for "letting down".

Years later as a VIA student in 1955, a small part of the upper storey of the Liggins Building became my favourite place. There was the tiny Art Room where we competed for space as we cut and printed linocuts, spilled paint, fiddled with clay and enjoyed the chaos and encouragement of our delightful and patient Art Teacher. One of our year became an artist, one a potter, a few had talent, all enjoyed the experience and benefited from the extended Art History curriculum which was introduced in that year.

Also in a corner of the upper floor was the minute (by present standards) library where I had the pleasure of learning the secrets of the "Dewey system", and spent considerable time helping to organise, reshelve, and reading.



Liggins House and The Vines, c. 1955

Dr Sue Morey AM  
Redlander, 1959

My first classroom at Redlands was Kindergarten in the room at the far-right end of the Liggins Building- now the Latin Room. For Sub-Primary, we moved to the little room at the back up the stairs. We then moved into a small building that was demolished long ago while awaiting completion of the first part of the Mowll Building. I was back in the Liggins Building for Latin classes and remained there throughout Senior School for Biology in the "Laboratory", the room at the far left of the ground floor.

Of course, we lined up on the concrete every day to enter the Hall for Assembly, with Mrs Furniss playing the piano for the hymns and weekly attendances by the School Chaplains, Mr Felton and Mr Setchell. We also had Physical Education classes in the Hall at some stage.

Margaret Wolfer (McDonagh)  
Redlander, 1959

I remember Mr Felton in Assembly who after reading from the Bible would always say something that made the reading relevant to schoolchildren. I remember his reading of the Good Samaritan, saying that if a girl walking home from school saw an old lady fall over and spill her shopping bags, she would stop and help to pick everything up. That would be being a Good Samaritan.

This has influenced me throughout my life.



Senior A basketball, 1959  
Margaret Wolfer (McDonagh) collection



Whole School Group in front of Liggins Building, 1950

Judy Blix (Attwell)  
Redlander, 1959

When my mother (Joyce Wilson) attended Redlands in the 1920's, there were Boarders housed in the Liggins Building. Miss Roseby was the much-loved Headmistress at the time.

In my day, from Junior school on, in the 1950's, the ground level of the Liggins building was used as an Assembly Hall where we used to sit every morning, cross legged on the wooden floor. There was a stage at one end and Mrs Hill used to play the piano. We sang hymns and said prayers and I still remember the words to the school song.

Gym classes were also held there with Mr Turner (from Bjelke Petersen). Miss Steele, Deputy Head, kept a keen eye on the length of our sports tunics by measuring how high the hems were from the floor when we were kneeling! Our sports tunics had a wide ribbon band in the colours of our various houses sewn onto the tunic, just above the hemline (mine was Cowper gold).

I remember there was also a laboratory on the ground floor at the side of the Liggins building and sometimes, as juniors, we would lift each other up on our shoulders to peek through the blinds to see what mysterious things were being taught!

The upstairs consisted of classrooms with rows of pegs outside on the landing where we hung our school bags.

Outside the building across the courtyard, adjacent to tennis courts, was a shed which housed sports equipment, and this is where the "free milk" was left in crates, often in the sun, which we were made to drink at recess!

All very primitive by today's standards, but fond memories, just the same....



The Liggins Building when Judy's mother Joyce Wilson attended Redlands in the 1920s

## Professor Diana Horvath (Longhurst) AO Redlander, 1961

I have vivid memories of both kindergarten and sub-primary classes being held in the two adjoining rooms at the northern end of the then Liggins and Arnold building. The whole of the ground floor was used for our daily assembly, we sat cross-legged on the wooden floor with the staff seated around the edge of the room. The same large space was used for Physical Education - run by a gentleman from the Bjelke-Peterson establishment; without any equipment other than us.

Later, I received piano lessons in the erstwhile kindergarten classroom - from Miss Maria Pia Virgona.

By the time I reached senior school another building had opened. It was named after Archbishop Mowll and was all classrooms with the new school bell installed in a belfry and tolled by a proper bell pull rope in the vestibule. Miss Steel was the teacher responsible for the bell and its usage.

Of course, none of these buildings had heating or cooling installed - not even fans! In winter there were kerosene heaters, later upgraded to single bar radiators.

## Dr Jennifer Farrell (Knight) Redlander, 1962

Liggins was the centre of school life in the late 50s. It was the assembly hall, the gym, the classroom, the music room, science lab and the building we played around at break. It was also outside Liggins after assembly I remember being summoned by my Form teacher, Miss Fitzpatrick, to open a letter in front of her. I was embarrassed and somewhat horrified. I can only assume she thought it was a love letter from a boy - what horror, to have such an item at Redlands! It must have been quite a disappointment to Miss Fitzpatrick to discover it was a letter from a friend, a boarder

at SCECGS Moss Vale, I'd met skiing who hadn't thought twice about sending it to school when she couldn't find my home address. Fortunately, Miss Fitzpatrick hadn't read the whole letter because my friend had been travelling to international ski races and was rather advanced for her age. She had related quite amazing and "educational" encounters.

## Pauline Lyle-Smith Redlander, 1963

From memory we had our assembly in the Liggins with prayers. I think we had this every day. We also had PC (Physical Culture) lessons in the building once a week with Mr. Turner as our teacher and our Latin classes took place here with our favourite teacher Mrs Fitzpatrick. We also had the annual prize giving ceremony in the building with Mrs Humphrey officiating.

## Deborah Hibble (Miles) Redlander, 1966

I started at Redlands in 1959. In 4th class and spent 3 years till high school in Liggins house, and yes, we sounded like a herd of elephants when moving about and bouncing on the wooden floors. I remember filling the ink wells on our desks and writing in out copy books with stick pens dipped in the ink.

We had our assembly on the ground floor in my time, as well as doing Scottish dancing and physical culture in the assembly hall.



Classroom during late 1960s - early 1970s

## Jane Anderson Redlander, 1970

All my primary school classes were held in the Liggins building (it used to be called Liggins House back then). I had started my schooling in The Cottage on Waters Road, so I thought I was very grown up when I moved to Liggins House in about 1959-60! Definitely no bouncing or running on the veranda allowed back then!

All large classes and events used to be held in the 'Big Hall' on the ground level, as there was no other assembly space except the quadrangle between Liggins and the tennis courts or the asphalted playground area at the rear.

These large events included 'Prayers' every morning, conducted by either Mrs Humphery or Miss Steel and occasionally augmented by whichever Chaplain we had at the time. Musical accompaniment for Prayers, including hymns and psalms, was provided by Mrs Furniss and occasionally by a proficient piano student.

We also participated in:

- P.E. and gym (in the latter years) with Mr Turner. P.E. (we called it physie) was conducted under the auspices of the Bjelke Petersen association and included marching and other synchronised exercises. Marks were given for deportment and personal presentation.

- Choir practice with Mrs Furniss;
- Dancing classes (Folk, Scottish and Ballroom)

The only exception to the large events being held in Liggins was the investiture of prefects and significant religious celebrations which were held in St. Peter's Church opposite and the annual Speech Nights which were held in the Sydney Town Hall.

The large room on the ground floor left was the Science Lab for senior students with Mrs. Mellor. Miss Wiseman used to take craft classes in our Liggins form rooms, but the Science Lab was used for pottery as the sinks were needed plus the kiln was installed there.

Piano and Speech lessons were conducted by Mrs Furniss in the top floor right hand room. I hope that the Liggins building will not be demolished as it is a significant part of Redlands' history.



Liggins Hall – Assembly, c.1964

Sue Grose (Wood)  
Redlander, 1971

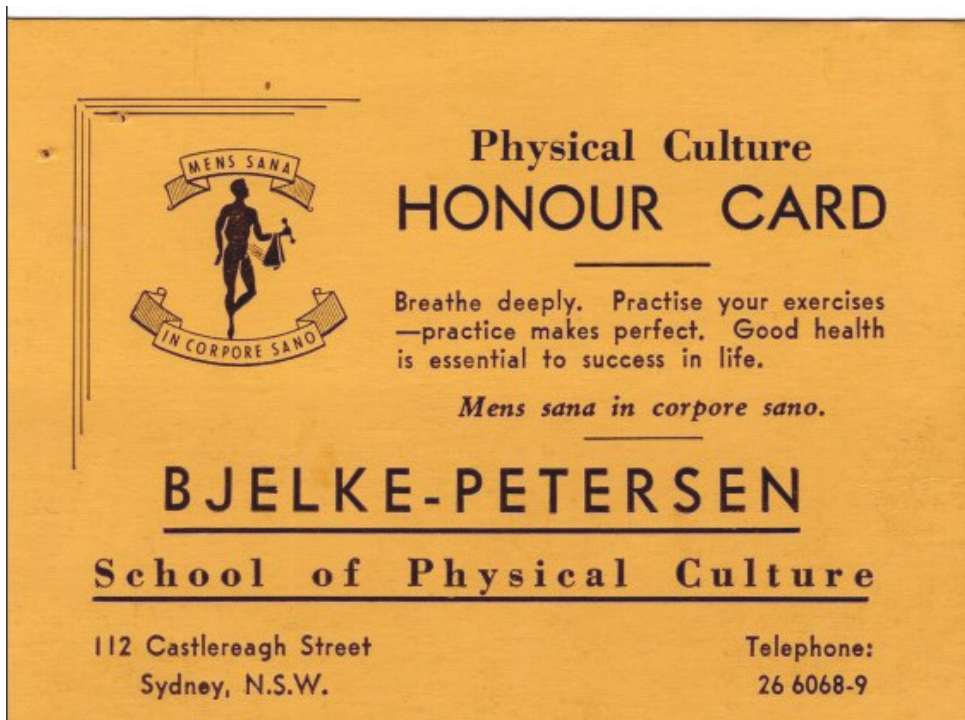
We used to do physical culture in the hall downstairs and I remember marching around and around the hall as part of our lesson. The music was something like the "Colonel Bogey March". We would have to all be in step time and swing our arms correctly, around and around the hall we went! After marching, we would then start our Bjelke-Peterson routines - jumping jacks, jumping johns, star jumps, posture routines and a few very structured dance steps.

When I was in Year 5, we had two classes I think and our class was in a tiny room at the top of the wooden stairs of the building. We had identical twins in our class, and they took great delight in confusing our class teacher (Mrs Newell, I think).

In fact, sometimes Mrs Newell would test her own skills by asking the twins to go outside the classroom and then come in one by one. The only trouble was that the girls would swap their hair ribbons or socks around and Mrs Trainer just couldn't get it right! We all thought it was hilarious!!

I remember at recess and lunch time we would often compete with other girls to grab and use the south-eastern wall of the building for our ball games. Our favourite was Sevens - throwing the ball against the wall and performing tricks on each count up to 7.

The memories flood back as I look through our LUX magazines - we did have fun at school!



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The Bjelke-Petersen fitness routines took place after a march around the Liggins Hall

## Angela Ayres (Ball) Redlander, 1973

I remember my first-year high school roll-call class was in the top floor of the Liggins House. It was in the first room on the eastern side of the building (above the Art room).

My surname being Ball I remember that I was seated alphabetically among Arnold, Ashton, Ball, Barton, Basil-Jones, Bennett, Bonner etc. Mel Barton caught my school bus, and we became strong friends from the beginning.

I remember the Art room downstairs below the cloak room where I experienced using clay and various art mediums such as oil paint, crayon and charcoal. I was pretty proud of myself when one of my works was exhibited and sold in Grace Brothers Chatswood Art Exhibition.

Also, on the lower floor of the Liggins House was where we sometimes had PE classes. Dressed in our box pleated pale blue sports uniform with bloomers and a cord for the waist with tassels in the colour of our House. Mine was yellow as I was in Cowper.

I remember Mrs French who taught me Maths in another classroom block. She wore her academic gown over her clothes protecting them from the chalk dust. She was a fabulous teacher and when controlling the class, she'd use long words.

I can still picture our Headmistress Mrs Humphery walking through the school in her academic gown with her little chihuahua dog following closely along with her. Her office was located not far from the Liggins House.

Of course, we were all in the Hall watching the footage on television of Man landing on the Moon in 1969. I remember the canteen under the Hall and buying a meat pie with sauce for lunch for about 10 cents.

I loved my years at SCEGGS and am always proud to say that's where I went to school. Wish I was there with you all for the luncheon. 50 Years!



Class of 1973 - Year 2



To recognise, honour and celebrate  
the outstanding local and global achievements  
of the Redlander Alumni Community,  
we are pleased to announce the

*Redlander Alumni Award and  
Young Redlander Alumni Award*

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**2023 NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN**



**Please scan to nominate.**

For more details, please contact Kim Flatman  
Alumni & Community Engagement Coordinator  
[alumni@redlands.nsw.edu.au](mailto:alumni@redlands.nsw.edu.au)