"Two Centuries of Service"
Five Special Teachers
at Milton State School

by John Pearn

Submitted 6 December, 1988

"To wake the Soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart;
To raise mankind on conscious virtue bold".

Alexander Pope (1688-1744).

The role of the teacher is indeed to waken interest and curiosity, to develop enthusiasm for learning, and to raise the knowledge of pupils to cope with the real world of today. Many of our Queensland primary teachers indeed achieved that task. On so many occasions also did they “mend the heart”. Perhaps they failed in raising all of us to “conscious virtue bold”, but we were influenced, individually and collectively, by the example of their lives.

Milton State School, in Brisbane, has had many exceptional teachers; perhaps no more so than those who taught in the troubled times of World War II and its immediate aftermath. Five senior teachers there were who, even by the high standards of the day, were deemed exceptional. Martin Garske, Ethel Grace (“Tot”) Jacobs, Alfred Purdy, Colin Spiers, and Arthur Young—household names to more than a generation of the youth of the inner suburbs of Western Brisbane.

As senior teachers in the important years of our early adolescence, they carried a responsibility that shall not go unsung. Their legacy is in the direction and example imparted to thousands of young lives—a generation which was the first to be subjected to the spectre of nuclear warfare, yet the wonders of the computer age. Their teaching spanned the decades both before and after the Second World War.

These five teachers collectively gave of themselves far more than two centuries of active teaching. Two generations of the children of Queensland are the richer for their “having passed this way”. At Milton School alone, they endeavoured “to raise the genius . . . and to make conscious virtue bold” for over a century of service. It is apposite that these short biographical profiles should record such dedicated service, in the Centenary Year of the School.

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Their number of years of teaching service were:

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<th>Teacher</th>
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<td>Mr Martin Garske</td>
<td>39 years</td>
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<td>Miss Ethel Grace (“Tot”) Jacobs</td>
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<td>Mr Alfred Purdy</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL YEARS OF SERVICE</strong></td>
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**MR MARTIN GARSKE**

Milton School was blessed with two famous teachers of the Scholarship Class, their teaching spanning a generation in that role. Mr Alfred Purdy taught the Scholarship class at Milton for 19 years (c 1937-c 1956); and Mr Martin Garske for 23 years (1935-1958), before being appointed as deputy head, in which role he completed another 14 years service at the School.

A legend even in his forties, Martin Garske epitomised all that was highest, in the superb education which Milton gave to so many of its sons and daughters. He brought that blend of encouragement without licence, guidance without forbearance, and insistence on high standards which somehow seemed to fit so well the pragmatic world of postwar Brisbane to which so many of his pupils were to emerge.

Martin Garske was born on a small mixed crop (potatoes, corn and pumpkins) and dairy farm at Flagstone Creek, near Helidon, in 1906. His own schooling was at the one-teacher school of Flagstone Creek, in the period 1911 to 1920. It was a milestone to receive permission to sit for the State Scholarship Examination in those days, let alone to pass. Mr Garske recalls travelling with his father to Toowoomba, to sit for the examination in April 1920, journeying up the Range, then staying overnight in a boarding house before the examination itself. It is recalled that it was on that trip, to start his life’s progress on the career path of teaching, that he first saw electric light. He spent two years in secondary schooling at the Toowoomba Christian Brothers College, a time (1920-1922) during which his own career decisions for primary school teaching were crystallised. In those days there were two streams for trainee teachers—one, the Pupil-Teacher Scheme, was a form of classfront apprenticeship. The other was the formal training provided at the Teachers Training College in Brisbane, the latter available only to the select few. Ten men and ten women only were chosen each year from the results of the Junior Public Examination, and Martin Garske won one of the ten scholarships for men to enable him to enter Training College. He recalls his years at the Teachers Training College, then housed in the old Trades Hall Building in Turbot Street in Brisbane. Practical classes were completed at the Normal School, under that famous headmaster Mr Frances Cecil Thompson in Ann Street in the City. He graduated in July 1925 as an Assistant Teacher, taught subsequently at Junction Park (18
months), at Wynnum North (two years) and at Proserpine (three years) in North Queensland.

Thus it was in 1933 that he was transferred to Milton State School, to the old wooden school building which holds so many memories for the School’s Alumni today.

Those first years at Milton embodied a school life which was very different from that of the School in its Centenary year today. Teachers and teaching, staff relationships and curriculum, all held a formality unrecognisable in the educational system of today. All teachers wore suits, and even in the summer heat and humidity of Brisbane, it was forbidden to teach in front of the class without a coat and tie. The relationship between headmaster and staff was one of extreme formality, with no fraternisation outside the school teaching hours.

Mr Martin Garske, Scholarship Teacher and Deputy Headmaster at Milton State School, Brisbane, for 47 years (1933-1972). Sketched, at the blackboard in 1955, by Moya Walker.
School Inspectors held the careers of teachers in their hands, and a bad report (after an assessment time of sometimes only two hours each year) could seriously compromise a gifted teacher's career. Payment was not automatic, and every teacher had to submit a voucher at the end of every month to receive his or her payment cheque.

Mr Garske recalls that all teachers had extra tasks to undertake within the School system. One of his earliest was the maintenance of the formal "Corporal Punishment Register". He recalls that corporal punishment was administered for three reasons—(1) gross disobedience (such as not doing homework), (2) wilful misbehaviour, and (3) immoral conduct. He recalls that in the 1930s, he was required to enter up, for the whole school, 25-30 canings every day—but only for the first two types of delinquency!

That was the era of Vertical Grading, when the Grade or Form year (often between 120 and 140 pupils) would be divided into three classes according to the individual student’s abilities. He recalls that the newest and the most junior teachers were always given the third (and least able) stream, this latter group known informally in the profession as the "Foreign Legion". Mr Garske recalls with a wry smile that the Inspectorate System demanded that one achieve the same results with the bottom group, as those achieved by teachers with the most gifted and able students streamed because of their more promising potential.

Life was not all teaching. In December 1934 Martin Garske married Sylvia Margeurite Benvenuti, his loyal consort who was to be so much his support for the next 38 years of his teaching career at Milton State School. Those were the days also of the formal School picnic, and trip to Redcliffe. For this the old and much loved Koopa was hired, the pupils embarking at the wharf at South Brisbane beside a former Victoria Bridge. The Koopa would proceed down River and across Moreton Bay, with the entire school aboard.

In 1935, Martin Garske was appointed Acting Headmaster of the School, and it was in this position that he officiated at the opening of the new and magnificent brick school, that stands today. In that year also he had been asked to take one of the Scholarship classes, a role that he was to fulfil with such distinction over the ensuing 23 years. It is a wondrous thing to think that one teacher has personally taught over 1,000 senior primary school pupils—a schoolmaster in the influential day-to-day life of a child, their teacher for a full school year in that crucial final year of primary school, at a time in a pupil's life when career decisions about secondary school had to be made. To each of that vast number he was their personal teacher, guiding them through the intricacies of English and Mathematics, History and Geography, and (perhaps most importantly of all) the development
of that attitude to life and learning which is ultimately what a true education is all about.

Martin Garske is recalled no less on the sporting field. Three generations of pupils (it is no exaggeration to say) recall him in Gregory Park (the School’s “Green”) with his rugby teams, of which he was the coach and manager for no less than two at any one time. His special love of sport and of rugby brought him a particular closeness to more than a thousand boys throughout his teaching life. For three years also (in the 1930s) he coached the soccer teams, to enable at least some boys to enjoy the discipline and thrill of competitive primary school sport, when no other soccer coach could be found.

In 1958, the Queensland Education Department instituted a new system of appointing Deputy heads to large Queensland schools. Mr Martin Garske was so honoured, as one of the first group of three in Queensland to be so appointed. He served in that position for a further 14 years, until his retirement in 1972. In the period 1968-1972 he was seconded (for one day each week) to the Curriculum Committee of the Queensland Education Department, to work on the major revision of the school’s English syllabus, which was to change the direction of primary school English teaching in Queensland. That Committee was indeed blessed to have someone of such vast practical experience, good humour and flexibility in that most crucial of tasks.

In 1989, Martin Garske retains that wonderful sense of humour, that humility and graciousness which so marked his teaching years. In the Centenary year of the School, we salute him.

MISS ETHEL GRACE JACOBS (1896-1985)

“A Person Born to Teach”—thus was described one of Milton School’s most dedicated teachers, Miss Ethel Jacobs. She taught the Grade V to Grade VII forms for 24 years. Her affectionate nickname, we learnt with amazement after we had left school, was “Tot”. A large and matronly person, she was held in the greatest respect. A firm disciplinarian, her kindness and earnestness shone through so much of all that she did. She had been a Methodist Missionary and nurse in Fiji prior to coming to Milton School, and her genuineness and sense of responsibility was the hallmark of her teaching life.

Miss Jacobs taught a generation of young adolescents at Milton State School. She was universally liked by her teaching confreres, and formed at various times very effective teams with other sub-Scholarship teachers—Mr Colin Spiers, Mr Colin Hunt, Mr George Lawrie, and Mr Arthur Young.

Ethel Grace Jacobs was born on her parents’ dairy farm at Glamorgan Vale (near Ipswich) on 29th July 1896. The daughter of Alice and Maurice Jacobs, she came from Isle of Wight stock—her father had emigrated to Queensland only six years before. She lived
on the family farm for the first 13 years of her life, and received her primary schooling at Laidley State School.

At the age of 13 she commenced her secondary school studies at the Brisbane Technical College, and in the first year of World War I began her teaching career as a Pupil-Teacher at Toowong State School. Thus was to begin a lifetime of service to others, in two lands. A devout Christian who from her teenage years publicly manifested her faith, she volunteered at the age of 23 to work as a missionary and teacher in Fiji. Thus it was that in 1919 she became Queensland’s first qualified woman missionary teacher in the Pacific. She served for five years as Matron of an orphanage in Fiji. Moved by the need for a missionary to be trained in midwifery as well as in the profession of teaching, she returned to Brisbane in 1923 and enrolled as a trainee-midwife at the Lady Bowen Lying-In Hospital, on Brisbane’s Wickham Terrace. At the end of 1824, as both a qualified midwife and qualified teacher, already with five years missionary service in the Pacific behind her, she intended to make her life in the Islands. However, devoted as she was to her ageing parents, and concerned at her mother’s failing health, she returned to the Queensland Department of Public Instruction in 1925 in what was to comprise more than four decades of service to the children of Queensland.

From 1929 she taught at Ban-Ban Springs, at Wilston State School in Brisbane, and at the Queensland Correspondence School until 1939 when her last and most significant transfer was announced, to Milton State School in the inner western suburbs of the city.

Miss Jacobs—never referred to by her pupils by any other name—taught the early adolescent years (Grades V to VII) for a quarter of a century.

In addition to her skill as a classroom teacher, she brought her manifesting Christian principles to so many other facets of the life of the School. As a nurse, she ran the School’s sick room for more than two decades—no mean feat in a school of over 1,000 pupils. She was on familiar terms with the bearers of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, these latter not infrequent visitors to the School. As a former missionary, she ran an informal system of social support (a fact only discovered some years later)—also no mean feat in a school which drew pupils from some (then) of Brisbane’s poorest areas. She ran the School Tea Room, organised much of the teachers’ teas, and for many years was the Honorary Librarian. She ran the Junior Red Cross, and taught platoons of pre-adolescent girls the basics of first aid, and skills about home care for the sick. During and following the years of World War II, she developed a special rapport with the families of Servicemen. She was loved particularly by a number of families whose soldier-fathers were away, and especially by those many whose fathers did not return. At her Church (the Albert
Street Methodist Church in Brisbane) she orchestrated the Methodist Girls’ Comradeship (the junior “Rays” and the senior “Comrades”), and many a schoolgirl at Milton joined that group under her benign influence. She was a staunch advocate of the principles of the prewar Moral Rearmament Group (founded in Oxford), of which she was a professing member.

In the immediate postwar era, Miss Jacobs and Mr Colin Spiers formed a complementary pair of Grade V and Grade VI teachers. Both were devout Christians—the one Methodist and the other Presbyterian, and all their pupils were influenced by the work ethic of their manifesting Calvinist lives. Milton School was the heartland of one of Queensland’s safest Labour parliamentary seats, and a considerable proportion of the children’s forebears was of Irish-Catholic extraction. One senior teacher, a contemporary of this redoubtable duo, recalls with a smile that it took considerable courage to admit adherence to either the Labour Party or Catholicism in the face of the clear-cut attitudes of those two dominant Grade V
teachers. Indeed, one can recall that Miss Jacobs on more than one occasion referred to the class when it was not working hard enough, as "no better than a bunch of communists".

Ethel Jacobs called forth a particular loyalty from those in her class, a loyalty which intensified as the years passed, and the legacy of her teaching was appreciated. It is recalled that there was a special sense of occasion on the day of her retirement in 1962, when she finally stood aside at 65 years at what she regarded as an unnecessarily premature retirement. After a vigorous post-retirement period of lecturing for eight years at the Methodist Training College at Kangaroo Point, she entered a retirement home in 1979 at the age of 83 years. At her funeral on 5th February 1985, two generations of pupils mourned her passing.

MR ALFREY PURDY (1908-1977)

Mr Alfred Purdy was also a legend in his own lifetime, in the world of Queensland's primary school education. A universally respected teacher, he was one of that small band of specialist Scholarship teachers who were so influential in the lives of more than 1,000 pupils.

Alfred Purdy taught Queensland children continuously for 48 years. A sporting giant also, some three thousand adults today recall his influential role as "their own" teacher, in the Scholarship classroom or on the playing field.

He was born in Toowoomba (29 May 1908), the son of Charles Purdy, a shearer. The young Alfred was himself educated at the State School in Toowoomba, and subsequently at the Toowoomba Grammar School where he played both cricket and football in the School Firsts. He also won one of the coveted Scholarships to the Brisbane Teachers’ Training College. In 1925 he began the teaching life which was to be of such importance to two generations of Queensland children.

Posted to Atherton State School at the age of 18, he gained that experience of Queensland country schools, and of life, that formed the "priceless ingredient" of wisdom and style that characterised many of the State's young career teachers of that era. Whilst at Atherton he played A Grade cricket, on one momentous occasion against Donald (later Sir Donald) Bradman.

Transfers have always been the lot of teachers. Such was the quality of his service at Atherton that he was early brought to notice of the Inspectorate System, and he was transferred as a teacher of teachers to the Central Practising School, in Brisbane. In 1939, immediately prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, he was asked to take the second Scholarship class at Milton State School. It was at that large school (with over 1,000 pupils) that he was to team with Mr Martin Garske to develop a standard of Scholarship teaching which was the envy of many Queensland State Primary Schools for the next
generation. Those two fine teachers formed a redoubtable duo. Each held the other in singular respect. This fact, together with their great gift of technical teaching skills, did so much to make the Scholarship year one of such great influence. Alfred Purdy taught Scholarship classes in the top floor of the fine new brick building at Milton (opened in 1935), for 19 years. In 1939, when World War II broke out, his position was designated as that of Reserved Occupation, and he remained as one of that special band who continued the education of the nation’s youth, some of whom he eventually saw going to war five years later. Alfred Purdy joined the voluntary Defence Corps (VDC), and rose to the rank of Sergeant. Parades were organised at the School, drill was undertaken, and plans made for the anticipated Japanese invasion in 1942. That year saw the Queensland population in turmoil. Schools were closed, and children kept at home until the Japanese fleet was defeated in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Alfred Purdy is remembered by a generation of students for his meticulous approach to teaching, for his firm hand, and for his gifts.
as a fine teacher in all aspects of the curriculum. He never used the cane, but no liberties were ever taken, as his personality could occasionally be fierce. We respected him greatly, and lifted the standards of our work, that he might be pleased. Under his guidance and immense experience, we worked systematically through our syllabus.

Alfred Purdy, himself a keen sportsman in his adult life (he played A Grade cricket for “Norths”), was one of the doyens of the Queensland State Primary School’s Amateur Athletics Association. This body, with its various branches was responsible for developing and controlling the different codes of school sport. It encouraged and promoted all the major sporting fixtures, competitions, and championships, in some nine sports. Alfred Purdy was elected to Life Membership of no less than four branches of that body—cricket (in 1940), athletics (in 1944), swimming (in 1947), and hockey (in 1954), a remarkable record of service. During the period (almost 20 years) that he taught at Milton State School, he was elected President of the Queensland Primary School’s Cricket Association.

In the immediate postwar era, the cricket masters at the School were Mr Alfred Purdy, Mr Arthur Young, and Mr George Lawrie. For many of us, cricket was our special delight. We played it in the summer and autumn, at the beginning of each year, before and after school, in the lunch break, and in the spring and summer from August onwards. In the 1940s and 1950s, Alfred Purdy was the senior Cricket Master, and many was the occasion that our teams went with him, by the old “toast rack” trams, to far away fields. The ovals where we played—(the “green” of Gregory Park at the School, Milton Park (now Frew Park), Lang Park, Oakleigh, Nundah and Mitchelton—tended to be poorly maintained. Sometimes the grass was so long that the ball would be embedded in it within metres of hitting the ground. On one occasion, when the grass was long, and I was Acting Captain of the team, I recall Mr Purdy teaching us the first elements of cricket tactics. I can hear him saying “Knowing how long the grass is today, and that it is likely to be mown in the next week before we play the second half of our return innings on the same pitch, if you won the toss how would you elect to bat or bowl?”. Alfred Purdy gave of himself, far beyond the call of duty. He would stay long after school, supervising delinquent classes “kept in” as punishment, helping children with special problems, and on three afternoons each week supervised the extra-curricular sporting life of the school. He was always formally dressed, with starched long sleeves with cuffs, and an ironed shirt with buttoned-down pockets. He wore a white Panama hat in the long hours of tedious umpiring of schoolboy cricket matches, and it is in that role that so many of us imagine him still.

In 1959 he was elevated to the newly established rank of Deputy Head, and transferred to Mitchelton State School where he
completed almost five decades of service to the primary educational system in Queensland. As Deputy Head at that fine School for some 14 further years, his influence on children in Brisbane’s Western suburbs further increased. As a tribute to that influence, and for his example and service, the “A.C. Purdy Wing” of the School was so named, and is a tangible record of his life’s work. He passed away suddenly on 22 December 1977, at the age of 69 yrs, mourned by two generations of his former pupils. If the legacy of a fine school master is in the influence he had on the lives of his pupils, his legacy is indeed rich.

MR COLIN SPIERS

It is a rare thing for a schoolmaster to give 50 years of service to the profession of teaching. One there was who did this, and whose championing of the highest standards of learning became legendary in his own lifetime. In the Queensland Education system, the sub-Scholarship grades (Grades V, VI and VII) stood out as some of the most influential in the lives of children. Those grades comprised the years of childhood when the girls were growing up, and the first of the boy’s voices started to break. Girls mature on average some 18 months earlier than boys, and a class of 10 to 12 year olds contains an inevitable mix ranging from the most childlike of children, to the most vigorous and sophisticated young adolescent. In that context, the post World War II cohort at Milton School remembers two teachers particularly with great affection—Colin Spiers and Ethel Grace (“Tot”) Jacobs. The perspective of time brings a recognition that at the time of our education under them, they brought special skills of discipline mixed with tact and kindness which are always required at that stage of a child’s development.

At Milton State School, Mr Colin Spiers taught many of us for two years, and is universally remembered as one with a special influence on our lives. He was charismatic, individualistic and uncomplicated, dominant and regimental, wholly committed to teaching and to his pupils’ welfare, and uncompromising in the matter of standards and of principle. Mr Spiers—never “Colin” or any other nickname, except an occasional affectionate reference to “Old Spiersie”, took one of the Grade V or VI forms at Milton State School, in the period 1945-1953. In those eight years at the School, he established a special reputation for hard work, and the principle that knowledge is the indispensable element needed to live a fulfilled life.

Colin Spiers was a unique teacher. He could communicate with us, as equals, like no other teacher we had ever had before, yet he remained the strictest of disciplinarians. He would tell us wonderful jokes, and I recall (with shame) that so often we responded to his confidence with our own particular sense of schoolchild humour.
Many of his jokes were rather long and involved, and the relaxed moment that one of his jokes would bring emboldened us to give “horse” laughs or courageous half-groans.

He taught us duty, concepts of honour, and pride in our country and ourselves. He would constantly restate the values of good manners, tidiness, punctuality, discipline, hard work, precision, and service to others—virtues that I suspect even then were becoming old fashioned and out of date among many of his contemporaries. He despised humbug and sham. English and general knowledge were his great interests and his influence on us was immense. I rejoice in the education he gave us, an education better I believe than most other 10 to 12 year old children have received elsewhere. He published, at his own expense, a series of five booklets called “The Self Help Series” which he used as supplements to the school texts. Variously entitled “Derivation”, “Syntax and Accidence”, and “Correct Speech”, those unpretentious books provided a distillation of much that was the practical core of our language.

To the pupils’ eyes, he was uncomplicated. He was the first teacher that many of us had encountered who played sport with his pupils, and tennis was his passion. He told us of his family, of whom he was justifiably proud. He was the first teacher of whose home life I had had any knowledge—of his children and of their doings. He knew some of our parents, a rare thing in those days for the teachers at the huge inner City schools, and he was interested in our home lives. He would dwell on features of our extra-curricular interests—scouting, music and the like, and took a special interest in our extra-curricular successes. To him, the braver souls confided their hopes and ambitions. He was unashamedly elitist, and was ambitious for all of us—professing constantly that it was not what we did in our future lives, but how we did it. Hard work was the key to many of life’s problems, so he professed, and he set an indefatigable example. He taught both German and English after hours, teaching for many years at the Enoggera Migrant Centre to which came immigrants from the Wacol Immigrant Hostel and the Centre at Kangaroo Point, in the years when refugees were flooding to Brisbane in the post-War era.

Colin Spiers was born at Toowoomba on 16th December 1899, the son of James Spiers, the Headmaster of the Toowoomba East Primary School. His parents had emigrated to Australia from London in 1870, themselves having been pioneer educationalists in the young state. Colin Spiers himself went to school in Toowoomba until 1910, when the family was transferred to Bundaberg. It was from Bundaberg State School that he passed the Scholarship examination, at the incredible age of 10½ years, thus establishing a first milestone in what was later to prove a brilliant career in the world of knowledge. He went as a very young pupil to the Bundaberg High School (1911-1913),
and was fluent in German (under the tutelage of Mr Kroner, at that School) by the time he was 15 years of age. He completed his secondary schooling at the Central Technical College in Brisbane (1913-1915), the secondary school in Ann Street in Brisbane which provided practical courses in such diverse trades as bookkeeping and blacksmithing, for those children with a practical bent. At the age of 16, he became a Pupil Teacher. He recalls that he finished school himself on a Friday, and was told by his own father “You begin on my staff as a teacher on Monday”. Thus it was that in 1915 he began his teaching career at the Leichhardt Street Primary School, near the St Pauls Presbyterian Church on the heights of Central Brisbane, which also formed an important influence in his life.

Colin Spiers started his teaching career with a salary of £10 per year, being paid in instalments of £2-10-0 every three months. The career path for Pupil Teachers progressed through a five point graded system (PTO progressing to PT4), the promotional steps requiring the passage of formal examinations. As an Assistant Teacher, he taught at a number of schools (Darra 1916-1917, Kelvin Grove Boys School 1918-1934, and the North Brisbane Intermediate School at

*Mr Colin Spiers, Interdominion Quiz Champion, esteemed teacher and sportsman. Remembered as a dominant teaching force at Milton State School (1946-1953), he taught Queensland children for five decades (1915-1965).*
Kelvin Grove 1935-1941, Oakleigh State School 1942-1944). His positive personality was perhaps partly due to his Scottish ancestry and partly the result of his 16 years of teaching boys exclusively, in the segregated educational system of the day. He left Milton in 1953, teaching subsequently at Corinda State School (1954-1960), and completing his career of 50 years in the classroom at the Queensland Correspondence School at Normanby, in Central Brisbane.

Colin Spiers was famous for his general knowledge, and his spelling and other skills. He had won the Queensland Spelling Competition (run by the radio station 4BH) on a number of occasions, and had won the Australian National Spelling Championship in 1948. We basked in his reputation.

For 11 years, under the pseudonym of “Mr Collins”, he was the star of the 4BH radio programme “Information Please”, which was a feature of Wednesday night listening in the pre-television era. The Queensland Department of Public Instruction frowned on any extra-curricular activities undertaken by teachers, and he was not allowed to use his own name for that famous radio show, with its widespread transmission throughout Northern Australia, New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.

The Interdominion Quiz Championships were revived in Australia in the immediate post-War era, and Colin Spiers became the Intercolonial Quiz Champion in 1946-1947. He recalls that the mainland State winners went to Melbourne for the finals, and that the final was conducted with radio-telephone input from the New Zealand and Tasmanian champions.

I can recall that it was his proud boast (if that it not too inappropriate a term for a truism) that he could spell every word in the Oxford English Dictionary. He would run through several pages every night before retiring to sleep. History and geography we learnt with a thoroughness I have never seen equalled amongst my contemporaries anywhere in the world. Latin and Greek roots and syntax were our forte also, due to his stimulus and the momentum and thoroughness of his teaching. Hale and no less robust in the Centenary of the School he served so well, three generations of his former pupils extend their gratitude for his influence on their lives.

MR ARTHUR YOUNG

Arthur Young brought to our middle years at Milton, the particular influence of his equanimity, his reliability and dependability, and a humble gentleness. He had served his country in the Navy during the War, and I recall him always with his ex-Serviceman’s badge proudly worn on his left lapel, on the coat that all teachers were required to wear. Left partly deaf from naval gunfire, he bore this partial disability with the equanimity that marked so much of his other teaching life.
Arthur Young was our senior soccer coach, and we delighted in the afternoon training sessions on winter Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Competition to play in the two School soccer teams was intense, and many recall the anxiety with which we waited to see who would be the chosen 22, to play each week during the winter soccer season. Mr Young rotated us, so that even the weakest had an occasional game, and we bless him for that humanity. I can still visualise his neat handwritten script, on the sheets of exercise book paper which he pinned to his door on Thursdays, announcing who would be wearing the School’s blue and gold colours, for the next day’s match. He spent a great deal of time with us in coaching, regularly staying on the School “Green” until the light was fading in the winter afternoons. He taught us good sportsmanship, and seemed always to be beside the goal scorer with a word of congratulations. On more than one occasion I can remember him treating a wounded player, squatting beside him and providing a rocklike security until the ambulance arrived.

Mr Arthur Young (centre, middle row) in a classic tableau which so typified his service at Milton State School (1946-1960). Cheerful and with great patience, Arthur Young contributed much in the classroom, and on the sporting field. This 1952 photo shows the Senior Soccer Team which he coached to Premierships success.
Mr Arthur Young was a special teacher who gave 14 years of priceless service to the School. Like so many other career teachers, he had served in small country schools in the Queensland bush, thus bringing to the practice of his profession in a large City school a special perspective and experience. He had taught at Tara (1935) as a Pupil Teacher, then for three years at Koondai-i (near Bell). He joined the Royal Australian Naval Reserve in 1939, and because of his special skills in signalling was seconded to the Navy in the dark days of the Pacific War. Stationed in the Torres Strait (on Wednesday Island in 1940, and on Thursday Island in 1941), his experience was such that he was transferred to H.M.A.S. "Hobart" for the huge sea battle that was to come. Thus it was in 1942 that he was on "Hobart" in its signal role in the Battle of the Coral Sea. He was commissioned (in 1943) following that engagement.

As school children we knew none of that, seeing only a gentleman of great equanimity, one who never changed and always had a ready smile and word of encouragement. We knew he was partly deaf, but that it was due to the gunfire of the momentus sea battle that saved the nation from invasion, we had no ken. Mr Young taught Grade II in 1946-1948, Grade III in 1949-1950, and Grades V and VI until 1960 when he was transferred to the Queensland Correspondence School. At this latter centre for distance education he served for a further 18 years, bringing his special skills to the teaching of the State's outback children. Fit and well in retirement, past and present pupils of his old schools salute him for the service he gave to his country in war, and a lifetime of professional and skilled teaching which he gave to the training of the nation's youth.

SOME SPECIAL TEACHERS

The world of primary education in Queensland has seen great records of self-sacrifice, resilience, courage and duty, by its teaching staff. The above brief chronologies record but five of those lives—five short accounts chosen because of the accident that they were the author's own senior teachers at Milton State School, in Brisbane.

That fine primary School has had dozens of other great teachers, equally deserving of mention and recognition. Our society underrates the influence of its teachers and the seminal role they play in the fabric of the nation. It is to be hoped that the lives of other teachers will also be so recorded. To those other teachers, not here recorded but fervently acknowledged, this short account is dedicated.