



## FROM THE HEAD'S DESK



As we approach the end of term and the end of the school year, our Lower Six students have joined us for the final week of their leadership course. I spent most of the penultimate week with them at Far and Wide in the Eastern Highlands. What an uplifting week that was, being surrounded by teenagers who were taken out of their "comfort zones" and responding magnificently. I saw a couple of students carry another's rucksack for two days, after that student had fallen. No questions asked, they just did it. The shared experiences in camp, often giving insights to issues beyond their years. What I witnessed was truly young men and women epitomising "Fellowship and Participation", our theme for the year. I am confident that we have a strong group of students to lead the school next year.

There have been some disciplinary issues at school in the closing weeks. Most of these involved the use (and abuse) of cell phones. May I remind parents that these devices are not allowed at school and may I go further and suggest that their use is limited at home. More importantly, what these young people are accessing and when they are doing so, needs to be controlled. These devices are a major influence in our society today and we as adults need to monitor and manage their use.

We had some notable results in the last week of the term, with our Robotics Team winning the "First Lego League" trophy. Our Team will represent Zimbabwe in next year's international tournament in South Africa. Our U16 Team won the Interschool Basketball Trophy at the annual Tournament at Hillcrest College over the weekend.

There have been a large number of requests for early departure from both Boarding and Day Scholar parents, often with less than 24hrs notice given to the school. With such a long holiday in front of us, may I ask that in future, these requests are limited to urgent travel and that the College is given three week's notice prior to that travel. May I take this opportunity to thank the College family for all the contributions and support given throughout the year, our first full year post COVID-19. I look forward to welcoming you back on the first day of term, Tuesday 9th January 2024. School will start at the normal time of 0725.

As the angels descend on the College campus and families come together for the special time of Christmas, may I wish everyone a blessed Christmas and if people are travelling over the Christmas period, may you do so safely.

*J Farrelly*  
*Headmaster*

## Bulawayo Wing – historical background

Opened formally in the 2nd term of 1984 at a cost of \$270,000 (long before the days of hyper-inflation!), the Bulawayo Wing is built on the site of the original school swimming pool. Plans for the new facility, however, were first announced by the Rector, Fr. Michael O'Halloran at.....

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Our Robotics Team winning the "First Lego League" trophy





# Lower Six Leadership Retreat







## Bulawayo Wing – historical background

Opened formally in the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of 1984 at a cost of \$270,000 (long before the days of hyper-inflation!), the Bulawayo Wing is built on the site of the original school swimming pool. Plans for the new facility, however, were first announced by the Rector, Fr. Michael O'Halloran at Prize Giving in 1982 when he remarked, "...to bring you up to date, I must go back 70 years. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1912, Earl Grey opened the new College building in Bulawayo. It was a handsome structure, majestic today even in its truncated old age, and it stood for the future of the College, solid in reputation, fine in achievement, Christian in concept, and at the service of a country on the threshold of development. In the first decade of this century St. George's was becoming very full because so many people wanted to send their sons there. That is precisely the situation which faces us today, and so I have pleasure in announcing to you that we have plans for a new wing. It will be built as funds become available over the next couple of years and will be called the Bulawayo Wing in memory of the College's early days. A rose window from the 1912 building has been given to us and will be incorporated into one of the gables of the new structure. It is to stand on the site of the surviving surrounds of the old swimming pool and will comprise Sixth Form classrooms, an Audio-Visual Room, a Geography Room, a further Biology laboratory, senior changing facilities, and rooms for club activities and meetings."



The original swimming pool, upper right, circa early 1929

As Fr. O'Halloran indicated, St. George's faced a big influx of new students at the time as parents of children in the former A grade Government schools were concerned about the impact of 'hot-seating', as well as a deterioration in teaching and other standards in those schools. Originally planned as a two-storey building, for reasons of cost the size of the building was then scaled down, to what exists today, but with provision being made for a single computer room. Fast forward to 2023 when not only has the Bulawayo Wing been taken over entirely by the Computer Teaching department, but so, of course, have a number of other classrooms!



Architect's original 2-storey design, late 1982

As for the old swimming bath, which was the first school pool in the country, it was designed and built in the period 1927/28 by Br. John Conway. A master carpenter by training, he had initially been attached for a period of two weeks, or so he thought, to the team of Jesuit Priests and Brothers assembled in 1925 to begin the construction of the new St. George's College buildings on Hartmann Hill. He then spent the rest of his life at the College until his death in 1960, and was involved in all of the building work that took place hereafter, including the construction of the Beit Hall. The carpentry workshops that he set up adjacent to the Madden Field produced all of the wooden desks used by generations of school boys, as well as all of the chapel benches, and the dining tables and benches in the refectory.

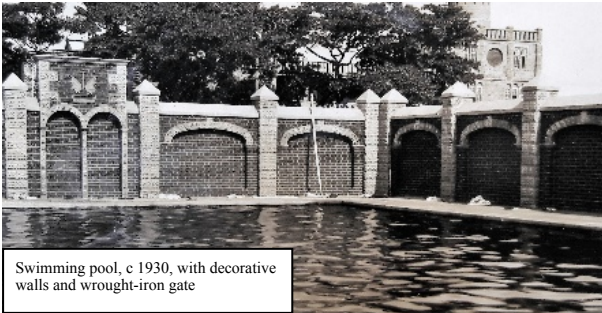


Commodore VIC-20 personal computer donated by Mr. C F Tulley, 1983



The swimming pool which measured 21.3m by 12.2m was concrete lined, but unpainted and untiled. Initially there was apparently no filtration system and there were times in its early days, so Old Boys have recounted, when it was rather green and slimy! In addition, in times of water shortage when there was insufficient for washing in the boarders' ablution areas, they were made to jump in and swim

around as a way of getting clean, even in the middle of winter! In those early days, when the student population stood at around 150, over 100 of them were boarders. As may be seen from the accompanying photographs, despite its limitations in size and depth, it was solidly built, with a finely decorated perimeter wall and a magnificent iron gate crafted on site by a Brother Schonbrod – that gate was then moved to the new pool when it was constructed in 1968/69, and is still in use today.



Swimming pool, c 1930, with decorative walls and wrought-iron gate

In addition, the pool had a good set of wooden diving boards and produced competition winning teams of swimmers, divers and water polo players over the years. It also included a covered spectator gallery, and galas were attended by some distinguished guests – e.g. present at the 1931 gala was not only the Governor, Sir Cecil Hunter-Rodwell, but also a



Diving display, circa 1931



Swimming gala, 1931 attended by the Governor and other dignitaries

future Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, and the Catholic Bishop Aston Chichester SJ.

On a final note, some of the gargoyles that decorated the walls of the old swimming bath were incorporated into the foyer of the new Bulawayo Wing as a memento. Quite

what the thinking was behind the creation of the gargoyles, or their intended significance, is not known, but they are thought to be the work of a Yugoslav builder named Lucitz, who was also responsible for the statue of Neptune that used to sit on an island in the middle of a large pond on Neptune's Lawn. Like the gargoyles, the statue was hand crafted in cement without the use of a mould but, sadly, crumbled away over time till it was removed in 1965.



Gargoyle in foyer of the Bulawayo Wing – a memento from the old swimming pool!



Neptune's statue, c1930s

**J McCarthy**  
College Archivist