

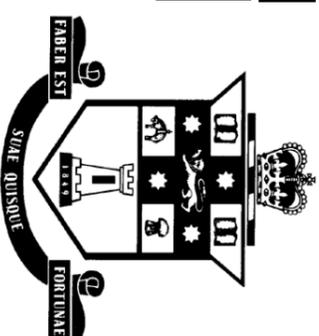
FABER EST

THE FORTIANS UNION

BULLETIN

NUMBER 74

May 2006



PO Box N1,
PETERSHAM NORTH NSW 2049
02 9798 8882 (AH) Don Newby
Email: newbyd@email.cs.nsw.gov.au

- Produced for former students of:
- ❖ Fort Street Girls' High School
 - ❖ Fort Street Boys' High School
 - ❖ Fort Street High School

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

SURFACE MAIL

THE FORTIANS UNION
BULLETIN
No.74 May 2006
PO Box N1
PETERSHAM NORTH NSW 2049

May be opened for postal inspection

All the fun of the festival

The Fortians Union has been invited to the biannual Fort Street Festival on Sunday, May 21, which marks the end of Education Week.

All sorts of activities and entertainment will be part of the festival, in the school grounds from 11am to 4pm, organised by the Students Representative Council and the P&C Association.

A highlight will be a Battle of the Bands competition, with 11 inner west high school bands, as well as music performances from the Fort Street Instrumental Music Program (IMP) ensembles playing classical and jazz pieces, and drama and comedy performers. The Stage Band took part in last year's Manly Jazz Festival. The IMP ensembles have also played at the Opera House.

Attractions at the Festival include coffee & cake and Devonshire teas, international food stalls, markets selling a variety of goods, fun rides and activities for all ages. Children will especially go for a giant slide, super swoopa, storm ride, jumping castles and putt putt golf.

This is a good opportunity to visit the school and meet some of today's students. The Fortians Union will have representatives there, so come along and say hello.

More details on the Festival from the P&C president Nyin Cameron, telephone 9555 9946, email fortstreetfestival@hotmail.com, or see the website www.fortstreet-schools.nsw.edu.au



Annual general meeting

Once again the Annual General Meeting, in March, failed to proceed, due to the lack of a quorum, which was set down at 15 many years ago. A special thanks to **William Lee** ('51), **Stephen Echt** and **Alex Hill** ('99), **Owen Nantlohy** ('05) and **Tim Sowden** ('04) who came along. It was a good chance for older Fortians to talk things over with younger members.

The postponed AGM will be held on **Tuesday, June 20, 2006, at 6.15 pm**, in the Fortians Room, at the School. Under the constitution, this meeting does not require a quorum, and will proceed to the election of office holders for 2006. Also, the meeting will consider the previously advertised motion to reduce the quorum to 9, a more feasible number. Sad when there are so many Fortians unrepresented at the AGMs.



Order of Australia honours board

Work on the honours board is drawing to its climax. The board is ready to be mounted. Details of 58 Fortians have been collated by the boys of 1952, who are funding this phase of the project. Other names can be added as they are identified.



Dr John Yu

There will be a formal presentation to the school, at an assembly on Friday, May 26. It is hoped that many of those recognised will be able to attend. A special guest will be **Dr John Yu**. More details from the school, 8585 1600.



Annual dinner

This year's date is **Friday, October 20**. It's not too early to start organising your year groups. Join **John Macnaughtan** AM, who has been collecting the details of the boys of 1956 since last June. He plans the group's first reunion in 50 years at the dinner. **Bruce Munro** has said he will come from Canada. He will join **Ken Travers**, who topped the state in the Leaving Certificate, **Mack Williams**, who became a diplomat, orthopedic surgeon **Bruce Trevit**, solicitor **John Shailer**, architect **Alan Thomas**, and accountant **John Moore**. For more on the reunion, call **John Macnaughtan** on 6254 2562, or email him at macnaug@cylberone.com.au



Reunions

Del Swain reports that 30 of the **Girls of 1950** had an enjoyable lunch at Epping on Friday, February 3, to celebrate 60 years since they began at high school on Observatory Hill. Six husbands also attended. The next gathering is planned for December 2010, which, of course, will be 60 years since they sat for the Leaving Certificate.

The **Boys of '51** will have a 55-year reunion on June 23, at Pennant Hills Golf Club, being organised by **Ian Dean** and **Graham Simons**, who are expecting at least two dozen to attend. Among Fortians of that year are **Alex Mercer**, the year captain, who switched from law to golf and became the pro at Royal Sydney and president of the Australian PGA; Justice **Warwick Rourke**; and **Ian Cooke**, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Sheffield University in the UK. Reunion details from **Ian Dean** 9488 9238 or iwad@optusnet.com.au, or **Graham Simons**, 9481 0390, gragot@bigpond.net.au

FORTIANS UNION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete this form and mail it with your payment to:
Fortians Union, PO Box N1, PETERSHAM NORTH NSW 2049

SUBSCRIPTION FEES:

- Free (first year after leaving school)
- \$15 Pensioner / Students (annual)
- \$25 Annual Membership
- \$150 Life Membership

- I would like to donate \$ _____ in addition to my membership subscription of \$ _____.
- I enclose my cheque or money order made payable to the Fortians Union for \$ _____

New Renewal

Surname: _____

Given name: _____

Name at School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mobile: _____ Fax: _____

Awards: _____ Year awarded: _____

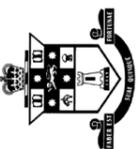
Years at school: _____ to _____

NOTE: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IS DUE 1 JANUARY

I agree to my personal information being given to other members of the Fort Street Community eg School, P&C and Foundation, Yes / No.

Signed: _____ Date _____

FABER EST



Print Post Approved PP24/34/59/00056

Postage of the newsletter is the greatest cost against the union's limited funds. Would you prefer to receive Faber Est via e-mail? If so, send an e-mail to newbyd@email.cs.nsw.gov.au
The newsletter will continue to be posted to those who prefer it.

An inspiring day

Speech Day once again was an inspiring occasion for all Fortians, from the list of achievements by prize-winning students to the music and vocal interludes, a highlight of which was **Miriam Waks** performing Cole Porter's Miss Otis Regrets.

We are sure to hear more of this young singer. Guest speaker **Alison Peters** (Fortian '80), a deputy assistant secretary of Unions NSW and a director of Sydney Water, showed by her own experience the ever-widening career paths opening these days.

All Fortians are welcome at Speech Day, in Sydney Town Hall. We can guarantee you will be impressed. Several rows near the front are reserved for Fortians, but you can also join parents, friends and others in the upper gallery. It's also a good chance to meet other Fortians, staff and students over morning tea in the Town Hall foyer afterwards.

This year a small group of Fortians Union members went on to lunch at the nearby Bowlers Club.



Putting pen to paper

A check on how many times some famous Fortians have appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald in recent years includes the likes of **John Singleton** (935 mentions), **Neville Wan** (about 450), and **Justice Michael Kirby** (386). But not far behind is **Con Vaitias**, who's been in the SMH more than 250 times in two decades.

Con is one of those keen writers of letters to the editor, on all sorts of topics from politics to the oddities of everyday life. His first letter published was prompted by an injustice to a work colleague. Con, who now works for a medical legal company, says Fort Street enhanced his awareness of the world and politics, with encouragement from art teacher John Firth-Smith, Mr Fay of the English faculty, and Harold Jones, who taught history and geography and also had many letters published in the newspapers. "I often recall that day at school, during the Vietnam War years, when the cadets took part in a mock battle, with some taking the role of Viet Cong soldiers," Con says.

Con rues not doing as well as he might have in the 1972 HSC maths: the day before the exam, he was at Canterbury races instead of studying. He's still keen on the gallopers.

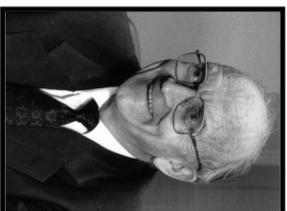
Another Fortian who's a regular in the Letters pages is **Dr Fenton Sharpe** ('50) who often likes to "have a bit of fun" with his missives. A recent one in the SMH, in which he wondered at what age men turn from letting their shirts hang out to tucking them in, prompted dozens of responses (the pithiest being 'when the wife tells him to'). "The ageing process is always close to people's minds," he says.

Since his retirement as Director-General of Education in NSW, Dr Sharpe has had several articles on education issues published. He also works with Uniting Care on ageing issues and AIDS care, and is a keen birdwatcher in the company of his grandson.



Hitting the hundred

We are pleased to congratulate another Fortian on turning 100. **William Hamnett** was born in Forbes on April 24, 1906. His father died when William was 9 and the family moved back to



Dr Fenton Sharpe

Sydney. Like many lads from families who were doing it tough, after school William went straight to a job to help support his family, and later continued his studies for accountancy by correspondence; he won an Australian award for his exam results. He went on to join the Cyclone Wire firm, and became company secretary. William was a keen bowler until two years ago. He's now living, in good health, at Minkara retirement village at Bayview, and would welcome phone calls or a card.



Church service

The Right Rev. Ray Smith preached at this year's reunion service, at St Philip's Anglican Church in York St, Sydney; his theme was "What would be good news to you?" Students Helen Gibson and Claire Rockell read the lessons. Three other current students supplemented the small group of Fortians who regularly attend this special service.



Building up the archives

The School Archivist, Terry Glebe, writes:

"Fort Street High is particularly blessed to have a fine collection of archival material, some of which dates back to the 1890s. Over the years, Fortians or their relatives have donated to the school photographs, Speech Day programs, Intermediate and Leaving Certificates, school badges and other memorabilia, all of which have considerably enlarged a wonderful collection. Such contributions, in addition to enrolment registers, Fortian magazines, official documents and letters, trophies, newspaper clippings, even the occasional tie or blazer, have all combined to give Fort Street a unique treasure.

"When I arrived at Fort Street, as Head Teacher of History in 1980, Ron Horan, the Deputy Principal and a Fortian, soon realised my interest in the rich history of the school and involved me in helping him develop the school's archives.

In the early 1980s, Lyn Trevini of the History Department formed a band of interested students to sort out photos and memorabilia, while I concentrated on helping Ron research and gather material on Fortians and the school.

"One role I enjoy is meeting Fortians, and often their families, who visit the school, and wandering down Memory Lane with them, enjoying their tales from yesteryear. I make a point of taking them to view the names on the honour boards of their particular year's Leaving Certificate; it amazes me how many Fortians, who had achieved greatly after leaving school, will say: "You won't see my name up there, I was only middle-of-the-road."

"We have honour boards from the Girls' School, as well as the enrolment registers and magazines available, so the links are often maintained through searches for information and reunions.

"Ron Horan's knowledge of the school and Fortians was truly remarkable, and after he retired in 1984, until his death in 1999, Ron and I were in almost weekly contact, as I sought information and direction about the school and past students. I would often open our 'phone conversations with 'I'm coming to the mountain again', which would invariably lead to a fun conversation and a wealth of information.

"Ron did the school a wonderful service in establishing the School's archives, not to mention his two fine books, Fort Street, the School, a history of the school, and Maroon & Silver, the photographic history for the sesqui-centenary in 1999.

"During my years as Head Teacher of History (1980 - 99) I developed a deep affection for, and understanding of, the



The 1951 Girls' Choir ready to take off for the Jubilee Festival

school. Some years ago the Fortians Union Committee honoured me, for my interest in the school, and made me an Honorary Fortian, with life membership.

"Fortians, feel free to contact me via the school, if you'd like to donate memorabilia to the archives, or if you are in search of information."



The year the choir took flight

Margaret Wigney ('51) writes: "I read Faber Est number 73 with interest, especially the item on Noeline Brown's dramatic year at Fort Street. You may be interested to hear that 1951 wasn't all bad news.

Noeline's talent as an entertainer has given us a lot of enjoyment over many years, even if her brief schooling at Fort Street contribute little to it. Fortunately another talented actor in the same field, **Barbara Wyndon**, had a little more opportunity to entertain us at school in 1952-53.



Barbara Wyndon

Noeline's boredom with the school choir was not shared by the 40 girls in the picture above, taken in 1951. In fact 1951 was a very exciting time to be in the school choir. We had won a state-wide competition to represent NSW in the Jubilee School Choirs Festival in Melbourne; for many of us this was our first experience of plane travel. Unfortunately we didn't manage to go on to the final celebration in Canberra: the competition was won by Our Lady of Mercy School at Deloraine, in Tasmania. Recently while travelling in Tasmania I met one of the Deloraine choir members, Connie Bennett. She took me to the school to see the winners' cup and various other memorabilia. In 2001 Connie organised a reunion of the Deloraine choir; maybe we could do the same!" Call Margaret (Wilson) Wigney (02) 9816 3656.



A compassionate man

A distinguished Fortian, Marcel Pile, died earlier this year; here is an edited version of an obituary by Chris Ceraighy, in the Sydney Morning Herald.

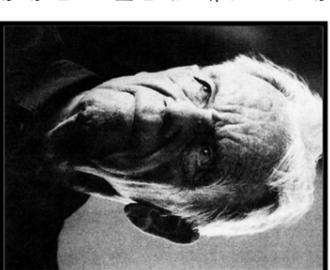
Marcel Pile was another one of those unstoppable Fort Street boys from the mid-1920s. A handsome barrister about town in the 1940s

and '50s, he became a distinguished, though by reputation lenient, judge of the District Court of NSW.

He was one of the Sydney University law class of 1936 which included John Kerr, and others eminent in the profession. Pile was admitted to the bar in NSW in July 1936, made QC in 1953, and a judge in 1974.

Born in Stanmore in 1911, he was given the unusual name of Marcel Emile De Marsay Pile by his father, Sidney Edgar Pile, an unconventional solicitor and Francophile. Perhaps Pile snr knew that giving his son such a distinctive name would inevitably help him to develop his independent spirit. The younger Pile practised at the bar in Sydney for a year or so before travelling to Paris in 1938. Within days he met a young Frenchwoman, Henriette, at a cocktail party at the British Institute. She spoke not a word of English, and he was reliant on the Leaving Certificate French he had learnt at Fort Street. They were married at Kiama in September.

They had a wide social circle - mad Irishmen, architects, journalists, artists, Bohemians and dozens of French visitors who became lifelong friends. Pile was a renaissance-style man and a nature lover. A good-humoured humanist, he was interested in music, literature, politics and philosophy - though certainly not religion, especially the institutional variety. He was president of the Council for Civil Liberties when Lady Chatterley's Lover was placed on the list of banned books. He was also a practical man who was good with his hands, and loved building and restoring furniture.



Marcel Pile

He had an intense interest in French culture, and was for a time president of the Alliance Francaise in Sydney. As a barrister, Pile presented many cases in the Workers Compensation Commission and had a genuine empathy for the underdog. A product of the old school, when jury trial was much more common than it is now, he would accept a hopeless case without notice, prepare overnight and present it with delicacy and finesse before the crankiest of judges.

He had an understated style, a measured voice and a compassionate approach. As a judge he was non-judgmental, aware of everyone's frailties - especially his own - and gentle, tempering his justice with mercy.



School dates

Below is a list of events at the School, displaying the students' performing and visual arts talents. The dates may be subject to change. For details, telephone the School on 8585 1600.

May 21: Fort Street Festival.

June 16: IMP Mid-year Concert. 20-22: Senior Drama Production Evening.

July 26: Open Morning.

August 17: HSC Drama and Visual Arts Showcase. 22-23: HSC Music Showcase.

September 28: Year 12 Graduation Ceremony.

November 21, 22: Junior Performing Arts Evenings.