

# A Family and a School

Jean Rasmussen

The writing that follows is historical information about Clifton Hill Primary School and a family that was first represented in the school in 1927.

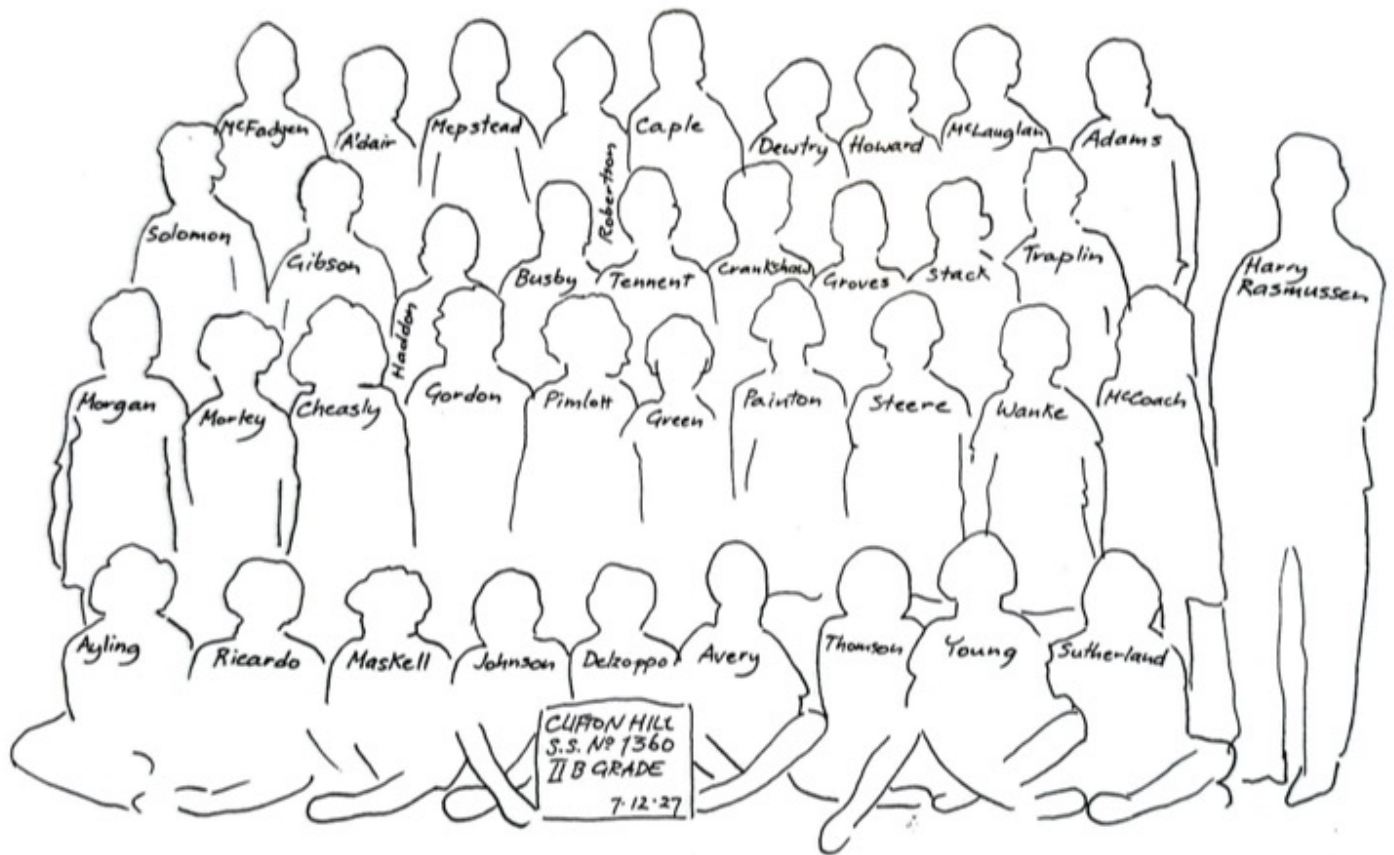
Our family members who have been at the school are:

Harry Rasmussen, my father-in-law, Duncan Rasmussen, my husband, our children, Joseph (born 1970) and Brigid (born in Papua New Guinea, 1975) and our grandchildren, Joshua Tram (born 2004), Sophie Tram (born 2005) and Eve Tram (born 2009) - son and daughters of Brigid and Sam Tram. I too have had a long involvement with the school.

Clifton Hill Primary School will be 150 years old on the 1st April 2024. The original plan for the school was to use a prize-winning design by the architect, W H Ellerker, for a single storey school for 500 scholars. In the planning period however, it became obvious that the school's population would exceed 500 and the decision was made to go to the architect's Second Prize design, a two-storey school for 1000 scholars. By 1888, with a local housing boom, the enrolment had reached 1,400 and some classes were located in the St Andrew's Anglican Church Hall situated opposite the school on Gold Street. When the new upper primary building is completed, it will not be the first time that part of the school population is accommodated across Gold Street.

The first Rasmussen to go to Clifton Hill Primary School was Harry. Aged 19 and just out of school himself, Harry was appointed as a Junior Teacher to take a Grade 2 of 38 kids in 1927; his first job and within walking distance from his family home at 66 O'Grady Street, east Clifton Hill. At that time, notorious Melbourne gangster, Squizzy Taylor, was feared in the local community, including the school. The Principal, William Dixon, (1923-1928), made a fortnightly visit to the State Savings Bank on Queens Parade to get notes and coins to make up the staff pay packets. He carried a Gladstone bag for the money and took young Harry with him to the bank. On the return walk to school Harry carried the bag with only the coins in it while the Principal stashed the notes in his inside pocket; the thinking behind the arrangement being that if they were held up by Squizzy Taylor, he would attack Harry and make off with the Gladstone bag.

In 2007 I received a phone call from Violet Dickinson (nee Young), aged 88. Violet had made a valuable contribution to a history of the school, titled *A School for One Thousand Scholars*, prepared by Alison Vincent and published in 2001. Violet, who had started at Clifton Hill Primary School in 1925, contributed to the history with grade photographs and a report on her family's struggle throughout the late 1920s and the Depression. The history included a photo of her Grade 2 with Mr Harry Rasmussen, the class teacher. When Violet was looking through the book again in 2007, she realised that three generations of the Rasmussen family were represented and sought a contact phone number from the school office. My conversation with her was mostly about her time in Grade 2 with Mr Rasmussen. She said he was a lovely teacher. Violet is second from the right in the front row of the class photo taken in December 1927. There are 37 children in the photo but Harry told us one child was absent that day. (*See illustrations*)



We moved into our Page Street house in March 1970. Page Street, which was open to traffic, was not a safe street for children who generally walked to school without supervision from parents. There were no parent cars causing congestion in the street in the mornings and afternoons as at present, but the street carried quite heavy through traffic.

Marion Miller, who lived at 22 Page Street from late 1969, and who became a Collingwood councillor, fought effectively for a street closure. At first the closure was with bollards at the Gold Street end, then the Wellington Street end was tried. After the Organ Factory became part of the school, an early form of the existing landscaping of the central closure and the half gardens at either

end of the street was introduced. It was a great development for the school and local residents and a factor in property values.

Joseph and Julius mucking around on bikes in Page Street 1978



In the 1970s and 1980s the unrestricted street parking was mainly used by residents and school staff. When the staff left after school and during the weekends, the street became a safe place to play for Page Street children. They rode bikes, played ball games, chasing games, skipped ropes and just mucked about together. For some years there were 16 kids who lived here, attended the school and played in the street. *(See illustrations)*



In 1970, Saint Andrew's Anglican Church, an old bluestone building dating back to 1871, filled the site of the current school expansion at the corner of Gold Street and South Terrace. When we arrived in Page Street it was a functioning church, but the building's days were numbered. In 1974 a machine with a massive ball and chain knocked down the church. Saint Andrew's kindergarten kids, including our son, Joseph, found the destruction and the noise to be most exciting. Sambell Lodge, a nursing home for elderly citizens, was built on the block, and the church hall was remodelled to serve as a church.

Saint Andrew's Kindergarten continued to thrive in an old weatherboard building behind the church. That building still exists, relocated to Walker Street, Clifton Hill where our granddaughter, Eve Tram, a generation later, attended the same kindergarten as her mother and uncle.

In 1970 the Organ Factory functioned as a business run by makers and repairers of organs. A beautifully presented burgundy-coloured van with the company name, Hill, Norman and Beard, painted in gold, was a feature of the street at the time. The original building, Yates Boot Factory, dates back to 1884. In 1927 Hill, Norman and Beard, a subsidiary of an English company, acquired the factory and altered the ground floor to make a space large enough to take the organ pipes for the construction of the Melbourne Town Hall organ; which they were commissioned to make to replace the original organ that had been destroyed by fire in 1925.

The Principal of the secondary school where I taught in the early 1970s told me he had attended a harpsichord concert in the Organ Factory. He said the acoustics of the ground floor space were marvellous for classical music. I don't know if this concert was a one-off in the last days of Hill, Norman and Beard's time or if there had been many concerts.

After the company vacated the building, vandalism occurred: broken windows, graffiti and general damage. A large shed to the east of the main building; a dangerous site with broken timbers, twisted corrugated iron roofing and rusty nails, attracted boys who loved the danger of it all and played wild games in and around the shed.

When the Education Department purchased the Organ Factory in 1975 one of its first uses was for a Kid's Club After-School-Care program that functioned at ground floor level and with outside play in the grounds. The program was run by a woman called Louise. She had a tribe of home-schooled kids of her own and the numbers were built up with kids from the school. As the school had a 'Disadvantaged School' classification there was no cost to parents for using the childcare arrangements.

In Collingwood a guy called Skip ran 'Skip's Trips' for poor kids from the area. I don't know where the funding came from but a bus, with Skip in charge, would pull up on occasional Saturday mornings and collect some of the Kids' Club mob from the Organ Factory and take off for a country excursion. There were other collecting places for kids from Collingwood, and some teenagers were on the bus.

I weakened on one occasion and gave Joseph, aged eight, my permission to go on a 'Skip's Trip'. He came home, said that it had been good and proceeded to sing us a bus song.

"Collingwood, Collingwood are we any bloody good? Yes we are, Yes we are. We're the bloody best by far. Oo, ah, lost my bra. Don't know where my knickers are."

And so on. That was the end of 'Skip's Trips' for Joseph.

The upstairs space of the Organ Factory was let to a politically left-wing oriented theatre company called New Theatre. New Theatre had moved from premises in Flinders Street, Melbourne. I have traced records of New Theatre Clifton Hill evening productions from 1980 to 1997. I also have a record of actors from the company working as New Theatre Daytime with classes at the school from 1976. New Theatre Daytime actors took props and costumes out to various schools to give children drama experiences. Our children, Joseph and Brigid, have vivid memories of classes with a charismatic actor called Peter Stephenson who could really make kids think.

In the Organ Factory theatre space stepped seating was constructed at the southern end of the upper floor to seat an audience of approximately 60 people. The rest of the upper level formed a stage and a backstage area. There are still signs to the Organ Factory Theatre on lamp posts at either end of Page Street, on the corner of Wellington and Alexandra Parade and on the corner of South Terrace and Hoddle Street.

By the late seventies some Page Street residents had vegetable gardens in the Organ Factory garden, where the science room is now. I grew excellent broccoli and continental parsley. We soon worked out that tomatoes, zucchini and other easily raided vegetables would disappear.

We spent 1975 and 1976 in Papua New Guinea at the University of Technology in Lae, with a return home for a Christmas/New Year holiday between the two academic years. It was possible to enrol Joseph in Prep, 1976, before our return to PNG so he set off with his kindergarten mates for a few days at Clifton Hill Primary School, then known as Gold Street Primary School. My guess is that he was marked 'absent' for the rest of the school year.

In PNG, as part of play, kids climbed anything they could climb. The local PNG kids were spectacularly good climbers and the envy of the ex-pat kids. Joseph, on return to Clifton Hill, climbed things: trees, goal posts and buildings. The school building presented a special challenge and there were often balls to toss down from the roof, adding interest to the climb.

There was an occasion in 1982 when a police car drove along Gold Street on the eastern boundary of the school ground in the late afternoon. Joseph, Grade 6, was climbing up a pipe, heading for the roof and clearly visible from Gold Street. The police called him down, took his name and home address and gave some firm directions not to get up there again. Then the police car drove off. At the same time Brigid, five years younger, in Grade 1, had climbed onto the roof of the outdoor toilet block with two friends. When the police arrived, the girls hid. One girl, the daughter of a barrister, was crying. She said her father must never find out. It would be terrible if he found out. Meanwhile the girls watched from their hiding place, listening to the exchange between Joseph and the police, waiting until it was safe for them to climb down. I did not hear this story until Joseph was aged 45. The police had taken no action beyond giving the boy a lecture.

Joseph became known as the person who could get balls off the school roof. When he was at high school, occasionally a little boy would knock on our door and ask if Joe was home and he would go off to get a ball down from the roof for the stranger. The story of the girls on the toilet roof is something I have just heard from Brigid. Joseph said they had decided on the way home not to tell us about the police. When I asked for some details for this writing Joseph, now aged almost 50, admitted that he quivers when he thinks of the danger of those climbs.

Joseph's closest mate and next-door neighbour, Julius Schwantzer, would frequently arrive at our house at about 7.00am on school days giving the boys two hours together before school. Both of Julius' parents left for work very early. Julius' mother was a pharmacist at the Women's Hospital. By some means Julius acquired two large syringes from the pharmacy and brought them to our house one morning. I was upstairs making beds. When I returned to the kitchen, the walls and benches were dripping with red liquid. The boys had loaded the syringes from a jug of Ribena cordial on the bench and fired off. I looked at the mess and said, "Get out" and they did. Later, Barbara Roysland, who was the boys' teacher in 1978, told me that the Ribena attack on the kitchen was a feature of "show and tell" morning talk at the start of the school day. She asked the boys about my reaction but they could not think of anything to say.

I joined School Council in 1977 and resigned in 1986 after taking on a demanding full-time teaching job. In the early days on council it became my responsibility to report on the Organ Factory at meetings. There was an Organ Factory manager appointed and in the Cain Government era, 1982 - 1990, funds came in for various community arts groups to use spaces on the property.

One memorable group was run by a woman called Sally. She had acquired funding to run social contact sessions for damaged women: ex-prisoners, streetwalkers, drug addicts and more. I walked

into the mob one morning as they were roller skating around the ground floor to Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun' (c.1983). It was a wondrous sight to see. The women were dressed in skimpy leotards, one a faux leopard skin with a broad black elastic belt, torn fishnet tights, lace gloves, garish make up; some of the women with feathers and flowers in their hair. Nobody spoke. There was just Cyndi Lauper and the rattle of the roller skates on the old timber floor. It made an interesting report to school council.

Brian Crowley was the Principal in the school from 1973 to 1983. Brian, called Mr Growley by the kids, with a mixture of fear and some affection, had a big voice and he conducted morning assemblies for the school in the asphalt Page Street yard where the kids stood on coloured painted dots in class lines. Brian's assemblies could be quite extroverted performances and some parents tended to hover, because you never knew what you might hear. On one occasion he told the school that it was such a beautiful morning that it was making him remember his own boyhood so he would tell them a poem he had liked as a boy. He proceeded to verse after verse of "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck". His rendition included lines like:

"The boy stood on the burning deck, picking his nose like mad.  
He rolled it into little balls, and threw it at his Dad".

On his way to another assembly Brian checked with Duncan Rasmussen, my husband, on the word 'dodecagon' for the twelve-sided shape of a shiny 50 cent piece. Brian showed the coin to the school and asked how many sides it had. Brian may have been anticipating an answer of the Greek word for twelve. Various hands went up but a tiny Grade 1 boy called Jeremy was almost busting to answer the question. Brian picked Jeremy and he gave his answer; "Two".

In the late '70s Greek women, mothers and grandmothers, all dressed in mourning black, formed a group on the edge of every morning assembly. They would depart after the assembly but some came back at recess and lunchtime with food for their children. I had mental pictures of deliveries of delicious Greek food and I asked Joseph if the mothers and grandmothers brought in special food. "Yes" he said enviously, "They have hot chips and milk shakes."

At that time some of the older student population would leave the school at lunchtime to buy their lunches. There were four milk bars in Wellington Street and one in Gold Street. Hot chips could be obtained on Queens Parade. Along with a number of parents I did not like the practice of kids leaving the school grounds. In 1978 when the new building, including a multi-purpose room and the canteen, was built with funding that came after the Karmel Report into Disadvantaged School, a committee of school council members and parents set up the canteen with two parent managers, Carole Roycroft and Margaret Scarrat. Other parents volunteered for the canteen roster. Hot dogs and hot cheese rolls, wrapped in foil, were popular in lunch orders. Kids queued up for over-the-counter purchases of carrot sticks, celery sticks filled with peanut butter, chunks of frozen pineapple, bunches of frozen grapes and slices of home-made carrot cake and banana cake. A new school rule was introduced. Children were not allowed to leave the school during lunchtime.

My rostered times in the canteen tended to happen when Wendy Duff, teacher of a composite Grade 3, 4 and 5 was running choir rehearsals at lunchtime in the Multi-Purposes Room, close to the canteen. Wendy had high expectations of her choir and children were encouraged to stand tall and articulate every word in their clear, piping voices. One choir song has stayed with me, a Scottish Halloween song about a witch called Alison Gross. Two of the chorus lines still sing in my head.

'Away, away you wicked witch, Go far away and let me be'.  
'Alison Gross you must be the ugliest witch in the North Country'.

Part of the Disadvantaged School funding went to purchasing Mathematics equipment for the school. In the late 1970s, early 1980s, a committee including staff members, Dione Wright and Barbara Roysland, and parent, Duncan Rasmussen, made the decision to select experiential mathematics teaching materials rather than spending the money on a computer. It was early days for computers in schools. Catherine Loader, 24 Page Street, parent, staff member and school councillor, took on the job of setting up the Maths Room, located at ground floor inside the west door of the school. In 1982 Duncan, Lecturer in Mathematics Education, took Professional Experience Leave from Phillip Institute and spent a term working with classes in the Maths Room. Over the years Duncan was a Maths lecturer for some staff members of the school during their teacher training days including current staff member, Vicki Gigliotti.

In 1981, with the school drawing from a significantly Greek population, a Prep class was established for Greek speaking children where the language of instruction was their home language. Frederika Deliyannis taught the class with Fani Zingaris as her teacher aide. The class was located in a ground floor room on the east side of the school, separated by folding glass doors from the other Prep class taught by Helen Walsh. There were 12 children in Frederika's class and 13 children in Helen's class. For one session each day the teachers would swap classes, Helen would speak English to the Greek children and Frederika would speak Greek to the others. Our daughter, Brigid, was in Helen's class and her closest mate, Alex, was next door with Frederika.

Alex had appeared at our front door, unescorted, in late 1979. She was close to four years old. She spoke Greek, Brigid spoke English. A close friendship developed quickly. Alex lived around the corner in Wellington Street and the girls played at one house or the other. It took some time before we met Alex's parents but we knew that Brigid was well accepted in their home. Alex got a good grip on speaking English at our house. Over many years Brigid was treated to big experiences of Greek culture. In Alex's home she helped to make the vast quantity of Stoumbi, tomato paste, and attended back yard barbeques where the delicious smells of grilled lamb and oregano would waft over the locality. She was invited to community events like engagement parties, weddings and christenings. Every big party

Emily, Alex and Brigid playing in the back building on the Organ Factory Property 1982



needed a new dress. Brigid went with the family to the Greek Orthodox Church in Nicholson Street, North Carlton, for Easter and Christmas services. Alex arrived at our house every Greek Easter Sunday with a gift basket of pastries and red-dyed eggs. Alex and Brigid turn 45 this year and their friendship continues. *(See illustration)*

In the early 1980s Greek became the 'language other than English' in a school where Greek was the first language for a large part of the school population. The whole school celebrated Greek National Day, 25<sup>th</sup> March, with music, dancing and food. The Greek girls and some of the boys came in National costumes. The rest of the population dressed in blue and white. Mothers made white blouses and blue skirts for their dancing daughters.

Caroline Hogg, Chairperson of School Council at the time, made the educational case for basic learning in the child's first language. Caroline, with two children at Clifton Hill Primary School, taught English and French at Fitzroy High School. She was elected President of School Council in 1978, a Collingwood Council member from 1970 to 1979 and the first female Mayor of Collingwood (1978-79). She was elected a member of the State Legislative Council in 1982 and, in the John Cain and Joan Kirner Labor State Parliament, she led three ministries including a term as the Minister for Education (1987-88). When Caroline was Mayor of Collingwood she set herself the task of learning Greek so she could speak to the local Greek community.

While the school had its Disadvantaged School funding in the 1970s and early 1980s, Barbara Roysland, Grade 2 teacher and school councillor, was a force in decision-making about grant applications and funds were found for some exciting excursions. Children's writing seemed to really take off as they wrote and illustrated little books about their excursion experiences. Di Neville, with her long history in the school, taught the other Grade 2 class at that time. The following are examples of Grade 2 writing from 1978:

Saying Goodbye to Connie who is going back to Greece for ever

'We went to Tullamarine Airport. Some people were sad to see Connie leave but Michelle and Mary were very sad to see Connie leave. When we gave the cards to Connie she just had a little smile. Mrs McHarg was sad to see Connie leave too and Connie was sad to leave us. Michelle and Mary and I were Connie's best friends. I was crying a little bit on the bus when we went back to school.'

Richmond Fire Station

'My grade and I went to Richmond Fire Station. I think their job is just to sit around doing nothing, just listening for the fire alarm to go off and when it does it gets really exciting. They all jump up and down the pole they go. When the firemen come back they all wish it did not happen.'

(The school shared a bus with Spensley Street Primary School, and some staff members had bus driving licences.)

Ray McInnes, minister of Saint Andrews Anglican Church, (1979-1983), a parent and on school council, was a lively participant in the school. He taught Religious Instruction and took an active role in boys' sport, sharing the coaching of the boys' footy team with Mr Eldridge, publican of The Tower Hotel. Anne Eldridge, the publican's wife, taught a challenging 'no nonsense' Grade 6. The kids had great affection for Ray and called him "Father A". There was an occasion, a school council meeting on a cold wet winter's night, where Ray arrived in a black full-length wool soutane. His sombre

clerical dress rather changed the atmosphere of the meeting until he removed it and settled down in casual clothes.

By the mid-1980s the local Greek population in the area started to diminish. Many Greek families moved out to larger homes on larger blocks in the northern suburbs and their small Victorian-era homes in Clifton Hill and Collingwood were purchased and renovated by professional couples. In those years there was not much evidence of pre-school children locally, in contrast to recent years where the forward population of the school is out there playing in the park and sitting in prams at Queens Parade coffee shops.

Graham Ryles was Principal from 1983 to 1989 during the time of diminishing intake from the zone with the school's population falling to just over 100 children. In 1983, with funds provided by the Labor State Government, Graham oversaw renovations to the Organ Factory that improved safety factors and the visual presentation of the building. However, by 1986 the smaller school population had no need during the school day for the space of the Organ Factory property. The school council decided to relinquish the administration of the building because daily management of the various tenants and the resignation of the Organ Factory manager made it too difficult for the smaller school, staff and school council, to face the extra workload. Community arts groups, particularly New Theatre, and individual artists with their studio spaces continued to value the property and a committee representing school council, Collingwood Council, Ministerial officers and representatives of the arts community took on the management of the Organ Factory. The After-School-Care facility, now with parents paying for care of their children, continued to use the ground floor of the Organ Factory until at least 2002.

There was some local concern that the school might be closed early in the Kennett era, (1992-1999), but the new Principal, Geoff Warren, (1989-2016) found a way with an out-of-zone intake to build up the numbers to 340 by 2000 and to over 700 children by the time of his retirement. The Organ Factory became again a vital part of the school, with the main building and extra new buildings fully occupied by classes, the addition of the Di Neville Science Room and the construction of a landscaped garden.

Really, the population of the old traditionally working-class school had been undergoing another change since the mid-1970s and into the 1980s. Although the population was smaller an increasing percentage of children in the school were definitely not from disadvantaged homes.

I taught some art classes in the school from 2000 to 2002. At the time Crayola was a sponsor for the subject association, Art Education Victoria, and I was funded as a Professional Development presenter taking art workshops to teachers in schools across the state. I found that these sessions were more effective if I had real student work for teachers to see so I asked Geoff Warren if I could go into some classes, in a voluntary capacity and with the art materials required, to work with the art teacher, Penny Adams, on projects of my design. Crayola provided art materials for Clifton Hill Primary School and gift parcels to students who had their artworks used as illustrations in product catalogues and on packaging. Crayola had been using 'fake' child art pieces, produced by adults, as the illustrations on coloured pencil boxes and other packages for markers and crayons. I persuaded them to use real children's art works, done by Clifton Hill Primary School kids, and the results were most satisfying. The initiative for Crayola to be involved in Art Education came from an American CEO who returned to America and the sponsorship collapsed.

As a result of showing children's art in my workshops with teachers, their own artworks had an extra spark. It was common for teachers to say, "Did kids really do that?" I took every art piece from a

project, done by the two Grade 6 classes, to an Art Education Victoria Conference at Trinity College in 2000. The work was splendid. The Grade 6 classes, each of 27 students, 20 boys and 7 girls, were quite a teaching experience. The boys, academically very bright and predominantly from an out-of-zone intake, had quite a picture of themselves.

One boy in the Grade 6, Thi Nguyen, stood out in his willingness to take on art projects and sustain concentration until he achieved fine results. The art room at the time was on the ground floor of the Organ Factory, also used by the After-School-Care facility, and Thi's mother had booked him in for care. While there he continued working on projects I had set for his Grade 6 art classes and, with the materials available, went on to make his own art works. In 2000 I was also working, with two other teachers, preparing a set of four anthologies for upper primary for Oxford University Press. The staff at Oxford accepted the idea that we should use some children's writing and illustrations in the anthologies so we searched for outstanding examples to be included. One of the anthologies with the title *Realms Real and Imaginary* included a section titled *The Lore of the Dragon*. Thi had made a grand illustration of a sky dragon, and we selected it for inclusion in the anthology. I went to Thi's home to get permission from the boy and his mother to publish the illustration. They lived in a very



small, one bedroom flat in Collingwood. Their living circumstances were difficult yet at school he was confidently involved with his peers from wealthy homes. I suggested to Thi that if he needed anything that our home could provide during his high school years we would be happy to help. Thi spent two outstanding years at Kew High School then gained entrance to Melbourne Boys' High School. Again he achieved at a high level and was awarded a scholarship for a student from a disadvantaged background in Years 11 and 12. At university entrance he received scholarship offers from Monash and Melbourne universities and accepted the Melbourne offer for a Law/Arts Degree. Throughout Thi's high school and university years he called on us often. I assisted with finding things that he needed for assignments and proof-reading his essays, finally reading his Honours Arts thesis. It was always a pleasure to read his writing. My husband, Duncan, was effectively a tutor for Thi in senior secondary maths and physics.

When Thi arrived at Clifton Hill Primary School in 1995 for enrolment into Grade 1, he spoke his first language, Vietnamese, but his spoken English was limited. His mother delivered him early every day to Geoff Warren's office where the Principal talked to the boy and got him onto computer learning programs before the school day began. (See illustration *Thi's dragon*)

In 2010 on an occasion when Duncan and I had two grandchildren with us, Joshua and Sophie Tram, we took them across the street to play in the school grounds after school. Geoff Warren, on his way home, saw us in the yard and asked if Brigid and Sam would like places in the school for the two kids. He had some picture of the family's history in the school. We passed on the message but Brigid was occupied with caring for Eve, the third child in the family and a very premature baby, so she decided not to take up the offer. When Eve was established and quite a strong child, part way through the 2012 school year Brigid contacted Geoff and asked if the offer still held. So in 2013 Joshua went into Grade 3 with Di Neville and Sophie into Grade 2 with Sharon Gilchrist. Di's long teaching career, across two generations in the school, is acknowledged in the Science Room which is named for her. We had known Di since our children were in the school, so it was wonderful to make contact with her again in this way.

In 2014 Eve Tram was at Walker Street Kindergarten and with us one day each week. Frequently we had a little excursion around the school during lunchtime. She knew many of Joshua and Sophie's friends and there was a chance she would see her brother and sister as we walked and ran around the school block. Maybe someone or even a group would say, "Hello Eve" as we passed the Organ Factory garden. At the Wellington Street playground almost certainly someone would call out to her. Then we would run around the corner to Noone Street where we would go up the lane to the cyclone wire gates for another look into the playground. At this point there was a distraction. Smooth river stones from the playground were often in the lane so we would ease the stones back under the gates then go on to look at the Gold Street playground. From outside the fence we watched small groups of children at serious play sites set up with the smooth river stones defining little domestic territories. On the way home the Page Street playground provided another opportunity for Eve to spot someone that she knew. After the school day had ended we would go to the school to move the stones that we had eased under the gates into the general playground, returning some stones to the area under the big plane tree and placing others in the bamboo patch.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, there was an evening meeting held at the school to give interested locals information about the planning for the new upper primary building on the corner of South Terrace and Gold Street. Among those present were owners of properties on Page Street and Gold Street. The principal, Megan Smith, architects and project managers presented the project and reported on the predicted increase in numbers to the school population. It is interesting to think that an out-of-zone intake 25 years ago was vital to the survival of the school and now there is an anticipated population of 800 children in the near future. From observations of the local area, properties often sell to young families, and the children go to Clifton Hill Primary School. The impact of the school's reputation in the locality is impressive.

We have had grandchildren in the school for the past eight years. We are now down to just one, Eve in Grade 5. There have been pleasurable experiences over those years with involvement in various school events. Grandchildren arriving 'home' after school, often accompanied by friends, have given us enjoyable insights to the school across the street, a school that has been part of our lives for the past 50 years. In 2010 Geoff Warren told us that it would be good for our grandchildren to be in the school and good for us too. He was right. A family history in the school that started with Harry Rasmussen in 1927 will end when Eve Tram completes Grade 6 in 2021.

July 2020

© Jean Rasmussen