

ALISON GLIDDON: SENIOR SCHOOL MISTRESS, INSPIRATIONAL MENTOR



CHANGE

In the hidden recesses of a small cell near Room 24 an English Library is gradually appearing, and if you have invaded the territory to claim a look, you may have counted, if time permitted, over 2500 novels. In the past few months the school has been painted. Now white ceilings and Latin lime walls replace the rather dingy colours of the last seven years. Late last month Form IV pupils saw a film, "Animal Farm," in the newly curtained and darkened Assembly Hall, and now you are reading what the Magazine Committee is pleased to call "a new look" publication. All of which proves that changes are happening at our school.

But what of changes in society? We are moving into the most rapidly changing world our civilization has yet known. We are faced with a knowledge explosion: countless facts, values and concepts compete for our attention. The traditional means of communication: speech, writing and printing are being enriched by television, the film, and face to face communication (distance barriers having been removed). But more than this we are living in a world where traditional values are being attacked and where a "new morality" is shaping out of the seething conflict of standards. Often there are signs of this searching in Form IV discussions where appears an urgent, critical questioning and a desire not to settle for second best.

We live in an exciting time and I would not blame you for feeling both elated and confused. Perhaps the thing to do is to take each day at a time. To translate this idea into our immediate environment, this means trying to absorb what our school has to offer and through our efforts searching to improve its quality.



(L-R) M Bowkun, V Mahorin, G Castagna, R Kiss, Mrs Gliddon, S Gunew, R Keegan.

In the course of some reading, I came across two pieces of research which might be of interest to you. Frieson, a Canadian educationist, has attempted to classify "student types."

He speaks of Acceptors. These students make the most of their opportunity. They live up the school by being involved in school activities. They suggest, criticize (constructively!) and are prepared to work to carry out ideas. They are leaders and innovators.

Then there are Collaborators. These "follow the lead," are good helpers, but lack the verve and initiative of the Acceptors.

The Vegetators sit in lessons, passively doing nothing from day to day. They don't contribute to class discussion, don't think and are barely alive — at least at school. Perhaps they emerge from their cocoons at home.

The Agitators see nothing right with the school, the subjects they are doing or the people with whom they share classes. They are noisy in class and don't allow others to work. They are carping critics who won't join in school activities. On Interschool sports days they are absent after having paid their money beforehand to avoid awkward questions.

Finally come the drop outs, the clock-watchers, what Friesan calls the Rejectors. These leave school at 15, without a reference, after accumulating a record for truancy. When in attendance their mind is not on the work in hand, but on the latest teenage craze, be it cars or fashions. They wander around the school with other drop-outs, sometimes smoking in corners when the maths lesson is on.

Commonsense seems to dictate that as a student is at school until he is at least 15, he should join the Acceptors and make the best of it.

Who influences Secondary Students most? Teachers perhaps? How many students care what teachers think? Are they concerned if teachers show approval or disapproval? Girls cared more than boys, Frieson found, but only 6% (boys) and 7% (girls) were influenced by teacher opinion. Parents were noticed. This is not surprising. 44.8% (boys), 45.6% (girls) listened to parent opinion. The peer group, i.e. friends, were a strong dominating influence. 88.3% (boys) and 45.6% (girls) really cared what friends thought of them and shaped their actions accordingly, even though they acknowledged their friends influence was not always desirable.

Which brings me to my last point. In a world where we need, not merely a functionally literate person, but one who is aware, thoughtful, honest and enquiring, let's get on with the job.

Mrs A M Gliddon (Extract from Alba, 1969.)



Katrina Boas, Sandra Crofts, Joan Butler, Mrs Gliddon, Jan Oscar, 1965.

Remembering Mrs Gliddon

Mrs. Gliddon's maiden name was Alison Marjorie Pickford. She was born on 9 June 1928 to Edna Marjorie Ball and Edward Henry Pickford. Edward Pickford was a clergyman with the Anglican church and based at Bendigo. Alison attended the Girton Grammar School, which was an independent school, between 1934 and 1945. At that stage the school had no class equivalent to Year 12 so Alison probably sat for matriculation at Bendigo High School. To complete her education, she went into residence at Janet Clarke Hall (Melbourne University) where she completed her Arts Degree and Diploma of Education. After further study in England (Bachelor of Education) she returned to Australia.

It is not known when she married as there was no listing found in the Victorian Births, Deaths and Marriages archives. In the 1954 electoral role she was listed as a teacher and her address was St Pauls Rectory, Bendigo, which was her parents' home. Mrs. Gliddon was teaching at Camberwell High School between 1959 and 1962 and received a promotion to transfer to St Albans High School in 1963. She was Senior Mistress and taught at St Albans until the end of 1969, after which Mrs. Irene Wescott took over as Senior Mistress.

Mrs. Gliddon continued her teaching career with the Education Department and was appointed Principal of various Melbourne schools, including Canterbury Girls' School and Vermont High School. She was amongst the first female Principals to be appointed to a co-educational school in the State Education System. In 1984-85 she was principal at Koonung High School at Mont Albert North.

Alison Gliddon died on 2 November 2012 at Maryborough. The funeral service was held at Christ the King Anglican Church in Maryborough and her remains were cremated.



Alison Gliddon with Form 6, Camberwell High School 1962.

Cathy Hatjiandreou: Someone I remember very vividly, because I loved anything to do with literature, was Mrs Gliddon and the way she conveyed literature to us. She was my best teacher, but she was my mentor as well. She certainly had time for you, especially for females because she was the senior mistress. Mrs Gliddon opened up a whole new world, not only academically but also socially - she was a person with many attributes which she wanted to convey to her students as well. I used to travel on my own on the train or sometimes with groups of friends and after an outing walk home after 11 at night. That didn't mean a thing because I was not afraid. The world was somehow safer and more naïve then. I remember dressing up nicely - you'd make sure all the clothes matched whenever we went to the city for a performance.

Mrs Gliddon encouraged us to see Shakespearean plays, Greek tragedies, musical comedies or opera as well. We used to get a season ticket to the Youth Orchestra at the Melbourne Town Hall. They used to do this once a year and there would be a series of them. I would go with Maija Svarts, Eva Radiskevics, and others. Maija and Eva were good piano players, whereas I didn't play any instrument. We used to visit theatre groups like La Mamma. I became a member of the Melbourne Theatre Company. These were formative years that opened up a lot of things for you. I must say it was all due to Mrs Gliddon. I was not only impressed by it but it became part of me.

Bruce Alcorn: Mr Torpey was there for some years as the headmaster, and Mrs Gliddon as the headmistress. Miss Taylor, the headmistress who had preceded Mrs Gliddon, had laid a good foundation to Mrs Gliddon's time as an outstanding headmistress. She was friendly and approachable as well as being strong in leadership.

Joan Butler: When I arrived at St Albans it was such a great experience because it was the first time that I met people from various cultures. Those particular first students were very aspirational, very friendly. There was that incredible mix of nationalities and the sheer joy of being there. Many of the staff were young and I had excellent mentors in Ivan Matthews and Alison Gliddon.

Les Cameron: Alison Gliddon, the English teacher, was infectiously passionate about her craft and excited us by what we learnt, thought, and did.

Julian Castagna - Some of the teachers that I remember with some fondness are Reid, Strauss, Gliddon, and Alcorn. People like Strauss and Gliddon were really bright people. It was the first time I saw brightness and cleverness.

David Dusting: Teachers such as Mr Rayner, Mr Pavlov, Mr Maddox, Mrs Gliddon, and Father Radford, helped me gain a glimpse that life often holds more than what you immediately see before you.

Vera Jurasov: I loved literature and Mrs Gliddon was well versed in Chaucer and The Canterbury Tales. She was also very good at poetry. You either liked literature or didn't go into her classes. She was very quietly spoken and really focussed on passing on this knowledge. She was the head mistress and had a little office on the corridor as we went down the steps past the office. I liked her as a teacher.

Vale Noone: Mr Torpey was the principal and he did all he could to help us with any programs we had for the young people. He had two brilliant assistants in Mr Matthews and Mrs Gliddon, two of the most outstanding teachers I have met in my life.

Barry Rayner: There were some really good, inspirational teachers: people like Allison Gliddon, Ivan Matthews, John Conroy, Eric Ford, and Doug Hill. There were also several migrant teachers who did a wonderful job, in particular Mrs Kriksciunas, Mrs Burden, Nick Bolvari, and Paul Pavlov. Many staff, including people like Ivan Matthews and Alison Gliddon, would get together at weekends at somebody's place.

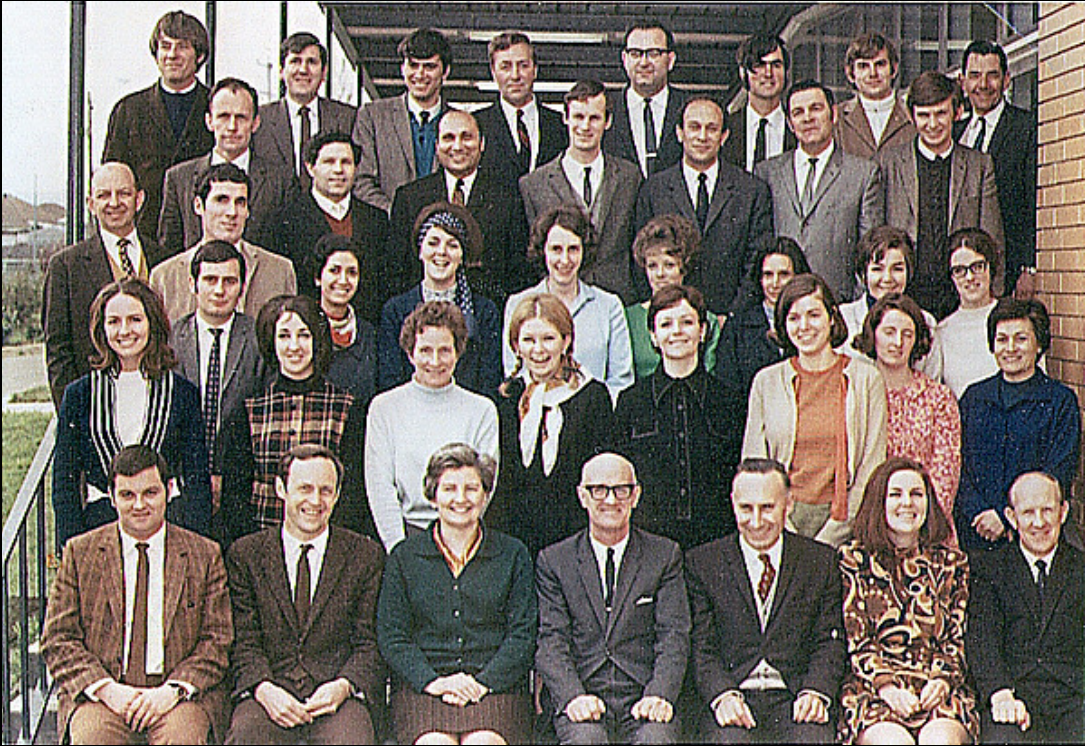
Lorenz Schwab: The rev-heads on the teaching staff were heavily outnumbered by decent and inspiring people, epitomised by senior mistress Mrs Alison Gliddon, who gave us an appreciation of literature.

Rosemary Keegan: Miss Taylor was the Senior Mistress when I started at the school and Mrs Gliddon was Senior Mistress in 1963 when I was doing the Matriculation year. I think she came from Camberwell High so she had some experience and coming to St Albans into a senior role was a promotion. She was the daughter of a clergyman from Bendigo. She went to Melbourne University for her B.A. and Dip.Ed, and then went to England for her B.Ed. so she had good qualifications. She taught us Matric English and was keen on Shakespeare and especially King Lear. She encouraged us to study the characters by acting them out in class. I was King Lear and practically knew the part by heart. Gliddon also introduced me to the works of Patrick White who was one of my poetry inspirations.

Mrs Gliddon had been an Anglican but had converted to Catholicism – she must have had a strong conviction to do that because her father was an Anglican clergyman. When I was applying for Melbourne University she encouraged me to consider St Mary's Hall as a residence because it was a Catholic facility. One of her former pupils whom I met at university told me Mrs. G. was a widow who had been married to an Anglican Canon. Perhaps she mixed it up with Mrs. G's father who was an Anglican clergyman. When she taught us in 1963 Mrs Gliddon was very concerned that I should re-discover my Catholic roots - the gift, she said, that she had discovered later in life. She said she wanted me to experience the sort of intellectual Catholicism that she had come to know.



1967 staff - Mrs Gliddon is fourth from left, front row.



1969 staff, Mrs Gliddon is third from left, front row.

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