



PLC  
PRESBYTERIAN  
LADIES' COLLEGE  
SYDNEY  
— 1888 —

## STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES:

### “MAN’S GREAT ADVENTURE” RECALLED AT PLC

On 21 July 1969 man first stepped onto the surface of the moon. Most people alive then probably remember what they were doing when American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped gingerly from the landing craft *Eagle* onto the lunar soil and uttered the words that have become forever associated with that historic moment: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”.

Back on *terra firma*, a Year 2 teacher at PLC Sydney, Mrs Helen Thursby (Woolard), seized the opportunity to ensure that her young students witnessed this event. Man’s greatest adventure in space was televised, but in the late 1960s televisions were not standard classroom equipment!

In 1969 the Junior School was in “Branxton”, a property at 16 Margaret Street, Strathfield. The school’s close relationship with the Thompson family\* meant that Mrs Thursby was able to arrange for half the class to watch the proceedings in Miss Kathleen Thompson’s lounge room while the others went across the road to Ivy and Alex Thompson’s home.

So the seven and eight-year-old students saw those first steps on the lunar surface, witnessed the astronauts carry out various scientific tasks such as collecting “moon dust” to bring back to earth, watched how the reduced amount of gravity effected their movements, and saw the plaque they left: “Here men from the planet earth first set foot upon the moon, July, 1969 AD. We came in peace for all mankind”.

Immediately after the broadcast, to reinforce what they had heard and seen, Mrs Thursby had her young scholars record their impressions in words and in drawings. She preserved them in a book, *Man on the Moon*, which is now held in the College Archives. Examples of their work are shown here.

\*Sisters Margaret and Kathleen, both PLC ex-students, were teachers at “Branxton” in 1946 when it became part of PLC Sydney.

