

STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES:

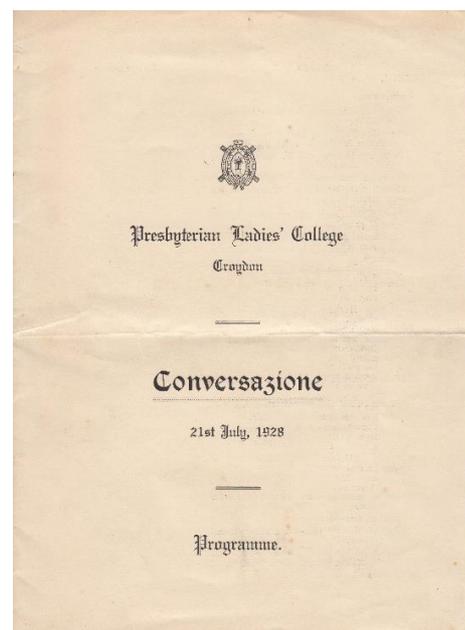
Open Day and Fair

The Open Day and Fair at PLC Sydney is an important and exciting day in the annual calendar. But the event hasn't always been as we know it today.

The report of a "Conversazione" in the 1928 *Aurora Australis* certainly describes aspects of the Open Day with which we are familiar:

"Towards the end of July a Conversazione was held at the School, when exhibits of work done by all the classes, with the exception of the Upper 6th, were on view in the different subject-rooms. Many visitors attended, and were shown round. Lectures on several subjects were given by some of the girls, and at night, demonstrations of First Aid bandaging, a French play, and a representation of a session of the League of Nations were given, also by the girls. Afternoon tea was obtainable, the proceeds going towards charities".¹

The event was reported by every year group in that issue of the *Aurora*. Year VB, responsible for the League of Nations segment, believed that their contribution was "one of the features of the evening", while Fourth Form took a more light-hearted approach, writing that "Although some unkind persons said that we put them off scones, still our display of flour relief models . . . was very creditable. . ."²



The program for the 1928 Conversazione



The school fête, 1936

There seems to have been no further Open Day events until 1960, but there were some fêtes during the 1930s and the 1940s. There was an Old Girls' Fête in 1930 and a school fête in October 1936. It ran during the afternoon and evening "to augment funds for the school improvement scheme".³ Indeed the funds were used the following year to help build a new classroom and to assist with repainting.⁴

¹ *Aurora Australis* 1928, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³ *Aurora Australis* 1936, p. 31.

⁴ *Aurora Australis* 1937, p. 3.

Activities to help the war effort dominated the first half of the 1940s but in 1948 there was a fête at Branxton, the pre and junior school in Strathfield. This event became an annual tradition featuring stalls selling homemade gifts and sometimes the Burnside Pipe Band. In 1959 proceeds of £347 were given to the sub-normal childrens' organisation.⁵

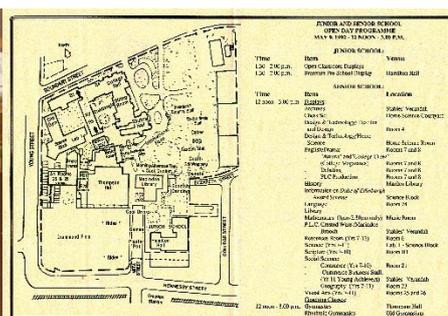
In 1959 the Ex-Students' Union invited the parents to join it in organising a fête to raise funds for the new classroom block. Rev. Gordon Powell of St Stephen's Presbyterian Church (now St Stephen's Uniting Church) conducted the opening ceremony and the day boasted music by the Burwood Police Boys' Band, cake, jam, garden and white elephant stalls, not to mention paddle-pops and fairy floss. In the evening there was a barbecue, held on the basketball field, "where the young people danced afterwards to the music of a strolling accordionist".⁶ The day yielded £2,042/16/8 for the Building Fund.

During the 1960s, when Miss Whitlam was Principal, Open Days were held during the week, usually between 10.00 am and about 2.00 pm. In 1960 Open Day was held on a Wednesday starting at 10.00 am. There were exhibitions of dressmaking, art, science and nature study projects. According to the program cups of tea were provided at 12.30 pm for those parents who "wish to bring a basket lunch and remain for the afternoon's activities". These activities included form and House ball games, a boarders vs. day girls ball game, march past and presentation of ribbons and trophies.

In 1972 the Parents' and Friends' Association conducted a "Grand Fête" in conjunction with the Ex-Students' Union on Jersey Day. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s Open Day continued to be held on school days, initially usually between 1.00 pm and 3.00 pm and by 1988 extending from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. The focus was on visitors being able to see displays of student work in classrooms and to enjoy performances of music, public speaking and gymnastics. Afternoon tea was served in the Dining Room.



Open Day, Junior School, 1977



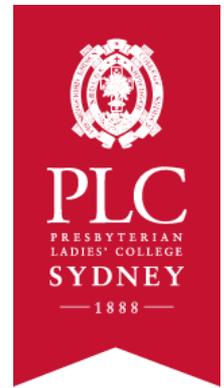
The first Country Fair and Open Day, 1992



Open Day, 1995

⁵ *Aurora Australis* 1959, p. 10.

⁶ *Aurora Australis* 1959, p. 18.



The format changed in 1992 when there was a Country Fair (10.00 am to 4.00 pm) and an Open Day (12 noon to 3.00 pm) on the same day, Saturday 9 May. The next year, 1993, the timing of the two events was the same, 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. The recipe of combining displays of academic work, tours of the campus, performances and demonstrations with food and craft stalls, games and rides has proved to be hard to beat. The success of the day relies on the combined efforts of the Parents' and Friends' Association, the Ex-Students' Union, staff and students working together to raise funds for the College and to promote good feelings within the PLC community and beyond.



A stall at the Open Day and Fair, 2003



A flyer from 2006



Enjoying a ride at the Open Day and Fair, 2009

Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, information has come from Series 54 Programs Box 456 Open Day