

## *My memories of Santa*

It's hard to describe the pride I feel of having had the opportunity to attend Santa.

Where do I start? It must have been 1961 when my great aunt offered to pay for my education and that of my sisters.

The feeling of putting that uniform on, the tunic, blazer, hat and gloves ..... so amazing. Every Sunday night I would lovingly press out the pleats on the tunic in readiness for the bus ride where we would 'see' boys, not talk to them but just have silent crushes!

Going from an overcrowded primary school and being one of the 'dumb' ones to going into a classroom where everybody was equal. (This period was post war so the classrooms were very overcrowded) It was a new beginning.

The excitement of going from one classroom to another for different subjects was something I had gleaned from books and now it was happening. The music room was one of my favourites, a special building.

Then there was the Paddock where we played sport or sat around in groups and talked. The vastness of it. I particularly remember playing softball and loving it.

My friends and I would go down to the Grotto, is it still there, and have 'meetings' like in the Enid Slyton books or Girls Own. How innocent we were.

Then of course there were the nuns. Sister Matthew, who was our Principal, would walk down the corridor, head held high, moving like a modern day model, so dignified and of course we were all in awe of her.

Sister Francis Mary taught shorthand and typing and this is where I achieved. I just loved learning this new way of communication and still remember it clearly. Typing skills were honed by a strict code. Nails checked on the way in to the classroom and cut if too long. If anyone dared look at the keys, a black piece of fabric was placed over the keyboard and that was that. I thank Sister Francis to this day. My grandchildren are in awe when I sit down and use the keyboard. What a life skill to have.

My favourite teacher was Miss Costigan. My love of history comes from her. She would stand in front of the classroom and literally throw the history books away. Instead her arms rested on her ample chest and the words from her mouth made the class attentive as she made Australian history come alive. Bless your soul Miss Costigan.

I loved this period in my life and should have stayed longer. However, after working at the Law Courts, I went on to be the secretary to two barristers at Owen Dixon Chambers and have continued to educate myself through life and had a variety of occupations, all of which have been very fulfilling.

I thank Santa for this love of learning and of course my Great Aunt. Always grateful.

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