



**Launch of “Men and Masters: A Centenary History of King’s  
College within the University of Queensland”  
(Dr Trevor Faragher)  
Saturday 24 March 2012, 6:30pm  
Kings College**

---

**The Hon Paul de Jersey AC  
Chief Justice**

Master, Justice Daubney, our author Dr Faragher, Mr Farmer, ladies and gentlemen

Many years ago I was involved with an organisation which commissioned a publication on its distinguished history. The result was turgid to the point where it could not be given away, much less sold.

I am pleased that the history we celebrate tonight neither bears that description nor will contemplate that fate. That is unsurprising, because any vibrancy of the subject should go a long way towards ensuring the vibrancy of the recorded history, and the vibrancy of the College cannot be gainsaid.

Yet it is the compelling style of the writing, and no doubt of the author himself, which has ultimately ensured the high quality and compelling interest of this production.

I congratulate Dr Faragher on producing a history which is both comprehensive and interesting. There is a wealth of material here, including fascinating photographs. As with many of these histories, the history of the institution tends to follow the history of its matrix, in this case the University, and in some respects follows the history of the State itself: World Wars, the Great Depression and even a few matters for optimism!

That the book should call up the history of the University is obviously not surprising, with the establishment of the College following only four years after the inauguration of the University.

That the College is now celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> denotes really substantial achievement. It is one thing for our publicly resourced Supreme Court to have reached its 150<sup>th</sup> last year: the position is inherently more challenging for an entity depending entirely on private support. It does great credit to those who have supported and led this College that it presents, 100 years on, as not only relevant, but vital as our author describes.

A recurrent theme of the volume which diverted me was the tension between the student body and administrations true to the strictures of the Church. It is interesting to note that the prohibition within the College on dancing, alcohol and gambling persisted with effectiveness for so long: I think into the 1960s and beyond, though with some acknowledged slippage.

And yes, there was even a ban on playing table tennis on Sundays. Imagine the dismay of a young man from a non-religious family confronted with that ban. I suspect the approach may have been meant more to encourage some personal discipline than to implement narrow religious dogma.

How things have changed, with one of the State Parliament's last legislative acts to sanction the playing of "two-up" on Anzac Day: maybe its legality will dampen its lure.

I have to say that a conservative approach to Sundays persisted throughout my youth. In my family one would not have contemplated, for example, mowing the lawn or tending the garden on Sundays. I vividly recall when in my early 30s my wife and I found ourselves in Edinburgh on Good Friday, to be shocked to see the shops not only open but doing a roaring trade.

Another theme, and one to be expected whether of firm foundation or not, concerns recurrent complaints about the quality of the food served in the

dining hall. I was rather taken by the student club resolution of the 1930s that the Master's wife should be constrained to join the students for dinner and subjected to their regime – an invitation not by the way accepted.

Another predictable theme concerns student pranks associated with orientation and so-called “freshersisation”, aspects which regularly strained many wells of patience. Years on, some of these occurrences seem rather tame. “Why all the fuss?” we may now ask, but they gave rise to major problems in the completely different cultures of those times. Our contemporary historian recounts these events entertainingly.

The successive College administrations have faced great challenges with developing social morés over this 100 year history, and have met them with dignity and responsibility, and increasingly, an arguably desirable level of flexibility.

We also read in this excellent history of the extraordinary contribution of particular individuals, and apart from the vigorous and highly respected leadership of the current Master Greg Eddy, I mention the indefatigable Reverend Professor Hedley Trigge, who when “rested” from the Master's role in 1950 for a year by the Methodist Conference, used the time to tour the State, in comparatively arduous conditions, raising funds for the development of the campus in Upland Road – and with spectacular success. I am very pleased to note that his son the Reverend Paul Trigge and Mrs Mary-Lou Trigge are with us this evening.

Now we join to launch the history on a day which will one way or another leave an indelible mark on the history of our State. The significance of that outcome, and the intensity of the interest it is inspiring, rather dictate the brevity of this address: I should not keep you unduly from that matter so gripping and I could stop now with an invitation that you simply read the perceptive and reassuring, excellent foreword of our seventh Master, Mr Eddy. But I imagine you expect a little more from me.

Today's related historical event invites our attention to the public contribution of Kingsmen over the years, a contribution at all levels of the community, and that achievement emerges plainly from the book.

There have been high-flyers. Five Kingsmen have been awarded Rhodes scholarships, and as many as 42, the University Medal. But beyond those stellar successes, countless Kingsmen have gone on to make substantial and worthwhile contributions to their communities, whether in the State or elsewhere, and in arenas ranging from the sportsfield to business, the professions, and pivotally, the church.

In terms of community contribution, for a university college founded on and seeking to promote the Christian ethic, there can be no more noble achievement.

I note personally that my own, albeit short term at Kings, enriched my personal and professional development. I am grateful to be able to acknowledge that heritage, although in "consigning" me to Kings as they set out on their international travels, my parents would not, I suspect, have envisaged quite a number of the particular experiences which ensued here for me: and I became a better person for experiencing them!

I should alert our author, at this stage, to one respect in which I left the book in a state of considerable uncertainty: why was the Matron Mrs Butterworth, as he records, "dismissed" in 1927 (p 24)? I find the lack of explanation excruciating. Perhaps he will "twitter" that explanation.

When the College opened at River Terrace, Kangaroo Point in 1912, the then Governor of Queensland and University Chancellor, Sir William MacGregor, delivered a speech. Our author notes Sir William's reputation for prolixity. The students apparently anticipated an address of monumental proportion. Our author proceeds:

"Sir William's speech was interrupted before he got into his stride by the ringing of an alarm clock. The Master, mistaking its tone, raced

to his office to answer the telephone, while a senior student crawled under the platform and, with his gown, smothered the ringing clock, and a second set to ring soon after. On Monday, at the invitation of the Master, 17 responsible students filed into his study and apologised. The apology was accepted. The clocks were dismantled and the parts distributed among the students, who all signed the face of one. That face is now in the Master's office."

No bell ringing tonight? ... not yet anyway!

Moving on from Governor MacGregor's time, we read of a College growing from fewer than a dozen students during World War I, in grand looking though apparently rather limited accommodation at Kangaroo Point, to a magnificent campus where up to 300 students are now nurtured and encouraged – and enjoy consistently good food!

This is a history of a now long-enduring, remarkable institution of remarkable people, the Kingsmen and their college masters. Perceptions of them have varied, as Dr Faragher makes clear, but as also emerges clearly: they have all, masters and men alike, exhibited tremendous loyalty to their collective which is the College, and commendable dedication to the fulfilment of its self-evidently most worthy goals.

King's is rightly proud of this century's achievement, and as our author concludes the work, with well-grounded confidence, it is "to be continued".

Chronicles like these should remind, interest, enliven and challenge. I venture the view that this history does, both for the individual and the institution.

It is with great pleasure, therefore, that I now launch "Men and Masters: A Centenary History of King's College within the University of Queensland", and commend it to both the reader ... and the purchaser!