

FORT STREET PUBLIC SCHOOL

2007 REUNION - 10 YEARS LATER

THE SCHOOL TODAY

I visited on 13 January and wandered all around the area. Being summer holidays the school was closed. It has hardly changed since our reunion in 2007. I do not remember the motto 'Success Through Diligence'. The tree out the front has grown much bigger and together with shade sails and artificial grass it is a much better place than before for the tender young pupils. Air conditioner units on the side indicate that some rooms are being cooled.

The bridge toll gates have been removed. Observatory Hill is now the premiere location for wedding photographers with such gorgeous views from the bandstand. The Moreton Bay Fig trees are huge and stunning.

The 2010 hit TV series 'Dance Academy' was filmed in many locations near here, especially around the Sydney Dance Company building at the Wharf. Curiously, nobody I spoke to in Sydney knew anything about this world famous series, now available on DVD. As a Fort Streeter I could not stop watching for familiar scenes. The school is in no danger of closing - I was told at the Observatory Museum that it is excellent.



OUR CLASS

Yes, most of us are now 75 years old, more or less. Really? We have lost some dear classmates along the way and no doubt in the next ten years our losses will greatly increase.

Some enjoy still getting together for luncheon reunions. Others prefer to meet up just occasionally when able to. I was lucky enough to have time to meet with Sarah, David and also Ross during my too few days in Sydney. The happy spirit of our 1952-1953 class endures. Most likely we will not all choose to keep an overall class roll call as we succumb to all sorts of infirmities and medical crises. I favour some privacy in the coming decade.

In the lovely Observatory Museum next to the school there is a nice photo of Chris Wood with his family. Yes, the ball still drops from the Observatory tower each day at 1pm, a link to our colonial past. A visit to the beautiful new NSW State Library building in Macquarie St tells us that the architect was Andrew Andersons (along with his extensions to the Sydney Art Gallery and design of the 'Toaster' amongst others). And who knew that Ross Bonthorne was a City Council elected member for over 30 years? They are among the many classmates who have left their mark on our society.

There is still no official report on the overall 'results' of our famed Opportunity Class system. Although there are no longer OC pupils at Fort Street, a number of other schools still have them. For me those two precious unforgettable years '52-'53 are an important ingredient of who I am today, even if I have not lived and worked in Australia since 1967 and now live in Hawaii as a US citizen of 18 years.

But my recent visit convinced me that I Still Call Australia Home and that my hometown will always be Sydney. I even renewed my Australian passport while there, despite losing my Aussie citizenship in 1999 when dual citizenship was forbidden. Thanks to Rupert Murdoch's similar dilemma I regained it 2000.

