



A Harmonious Transformation

Since the late 1970s the Perkins Building has been home to some of Cranbrook's finest musicians, and in 2022 it underwent a transformation to embrace a new era of musicality. We are delighted with the renovations of a school building that has been an essential part of our campus since its origins and is at the very heart of our vibrant and energetic Music Department. This renovation has harmoniously blended the old and traditional, with the new and the aspirational and we are excited to see how it will enrich the musical education of our students.

The Revitalisation of the Perkins Building

CRANBROOK'S MUSIC DEPARTMENT moved back into Perkins at the start of Term 4 this year, less than a year after the renovations commenced and with significant enhancements and substantial modernisation. From sound proofing walls and doors in percussion rooms to additional breakout spaces and increased natural light, the builders have combined modern features with the building's original features to ensure it was kept true to its history and foundation.

Craig Nichols, Cranbrook's Director of Facilities, says: "It was important to work closely with the Heritage Consultants to ensure that both the structure and the façade were kept true to the building's foundation. With this in mind the colours of the exterior walls and window frames were kept as close to the original tones and in keeping with its heritage." In the consultation and demolition stages, the builders faced a series of obstacles. "There are inevitable challenges when working with a building that is over a century old, and all the engineering and building code requirements that are needed today versus when it was built" says Craig.

In terms of the upgrades, the most significant is in the AV solutions which will help make the building more in line with areas completed during the extensive renewal of

the Senior School campus and the building of the Vicars Centenary Building. These new AV solutions include features such as the ability to view and record in the recital room from the recording studio, as well as between the new Orchestra Room in Vicars Centenary Building and the recording booth in the Perkins Building. Specialist music equipment located in all learning areas places the aural experience front and centre for the student.

At the forefront of any renewal projects must be a focus on sustainable features. The new Perkins Building incorporates a range of energy-efficient systems as part of its computerised building management system, and the building has been upgraded to LED lighting which uses less energy than the old fluorescent lights which had been installed many years prior.

Throughout the demolition and the subsequent redevelopment and refurbishment, the builders worked in constant communication with the School's facilities team to ensure minimal disruption to the school week and ultimately the students' daily routine. A significant amount of the demolition work was achieved during school holidays. We are very grateful to the builders for their understanding and patience working around the school's timetable.

Senior School

The excitement surrounding the reinvigoration of the Perkins Building has been growing for several months in the lead up to its opening, and not least by the Director of Music, Phil Beverley, who details how the importance of dedicated spaces is invaluable for the Music Department: “With some clever design we’ve managed to really maximise the space whilst maintain the aesthetics of space. The dedicated spaces for music making and listening to music was at the heart of the design brief. Our Performance Plus Programme will benefit from the facilities that will be available and allow us to grow and expand masterclass series and solo performance across the School,” he says.

The revitalised Perkins Building reflects Cranbrook’s long standing and unwavering commitment to nurturing the musical talents that reside within these walls. As we open the doors once more to this building, we carry with us the echoes of the past and the promise of generations of talented Cranbrook musicians to come.

Julian Baggett, Year 11

“I believe that the renovation will enhance my enjoyment of music here at Cranbrook. With Year 12 looming, I cannot wait to go back to Perkins when it is complete to hopefully develop as a composer and performer. I am sure the renovation will most certainly have begun to attract many new students to the Music Department looking to learn a new instrument or join an ensemble and band, improving music holistically.”



Wesley Woodhouse, Year 11

“The renovation’s greatest ability is undoubtably the universal access it grants to my fellow musicians. While the music department is staffed by incredibly motivated and skilled staff and has many musicians ready and willing to learn and contribute, its only limits up to now have been the amount of space available, and time restrictions due to limited spaces. With the new building, grunge guitar can be rehearsed with Vivaldi cello concertos in the next room, at the same time as electronic music development in the lab, with classical trumpet players performing downstairs. Due to the breadth and flexibility of the new spaces, every student gains a greater access to making their own music and building their own experiences.”

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Shoe polish and pastille candy: the handwritten time capsules of Cranbrook’s first students

“WHERE ARE THEY NOW?” is the question posed by one of the century-old notes recently unearthed by construction workers renovating the Perkins Building. After the dust had settled, not one, but three notes were unearthed - one in a tin of Kiwi shoe polish, and two in a pastille candy box.

The first was written in 1922, the second in 1923, and the third in 1924. Scrawled across their crinkled pages are the names of illustrious Cranbrook alumni, promises of eternal service to the School, and a

request that the notes not be disturbed - essentially, written time capsules. Sadly, it’s a little late for not disturbing them. Their place of rest has been exposed, and with it, memories of Cranbrook’s past: revealing the criss-crossing lives of some of Cranbrook’s first graduates and where those lives begun.

All three notes share some common features: they all contain the form and year of the group and a list of names. The first note, dated 1922, is significantly more spartan than its successors. Simply containing the form, year, and names, it is distinguished by a skull and crossbone emblem on the opposite side of the note and a provocative question at the bottom



of the page: “Where are they now?” The second note takes things a little further. Once again containing the standard form, year, and names, this note adds a paragraph of preamble. The authors wax lyrical about their “vow” of “eternal service to this School” and their earnest request that “you who find this Sacred Document will not disturb it from its place of rest.” The third note is similar, but identifies each signatory’s position in the student leadership team (Head Prefect, Day Boy Prefect and others).

The names of 20 Cranbrook boys are signed across the three notes, some of them repeated and some of them appearing only once. But how and why did these boys come together to create their respective time capsules? Well, school leadership, boarding, and repeated attempts at the Leaving Certificate are the most likely explanations. Four of the nine signatories of the first note were Prefects, while all but one of the second note’s signatories, and all the third note’s signatories were as well. And the tradition was most likely passed down by three people: Geoffrey Lindley and Francis Crago, the 1923 Head Prefect and 1923 Boarders’ Prefect respectively, who were both signatories of the 1922 note and 1923 note, and Gregory Walker-Taylor, the 1924 Head Prefect who was a signatory of both the 1923 note and 1924 note. 1924 appears to be the final year of this tradition, an odd outcome considering Maurice Cay, a signatory of the third note, went on to be Head Prefect in 1925 - but perhaps further notes will be found hidden across the School in coming years.

The hiding place for these historical treasures also gives valuable insight into how and why these notes came to be. Completed in 1921, the upstairs of the Perkins Buildings, where the notes were found, housed four dormitories for Cranbrook’s boarders. The boarder

connection is made crystal clear in the second note which, in its predictably elaborate prose, states that “these illustrious names belong to the Boarder members of the form VI A - 1923.”

Even after Cranbrook, the signatories of the three notes continued to live remarkably connected lives. Eleven of the 20 boys went on to study at the University of Sydney together, with seven of them at Paul’s College. A handful continued to be actively involved in Cranbrook’s alumni community, serving on the OCA committee and attending one of the first Old Cranbrookian meetups at Loosen’s Café in 1924. They also maintained connection in smaller, more intimate ways. Francis Crago and John Mansfield were named co-Godfathers of Reginald Maffey’s newborn son John in 1935 - baptised by none other than Reverend Perkins in the Cranbrook Chapel. And Geoffrey Carroll and Wilfred Johnson both worked at Smith, Johnson, and Co. as public accountants for a number of years. Presumably, all the rest kept in touch as well - but most likely in ways that weren’t recorded in the diligent reporting of the Old Cranbrookian’s Column.

So, bound by their shared dedication to school leadership, boys who stayed on for additional years, and the close quarters of early 20th Century boarding, these 20 boys, across three notes, across three years, wanted to be remembered by history. In that spirit, let’s remember them... ■

Written by Marlow Hurst,
Assistant Archives Officer
Edited by Dominique Novak d’Hennin,
Archives Officer

THE MESSAGE WRITERS

The unearthing of the tins in the Perkins Building renovation led to lots of questions in our School as to what happened to these young scribes, and what did they go on to achieve after they left Cranbrook School behind. Our Archives Department delved back into old school records to piece together glimpses of what they got up to after leaving Cranbrook...

FRANCIS ORR CRAGO (OC 1923)
Briefly took part in an interstate caravan tour with the Misses Joan and Betty Rayner’s Theatre of Youth.

GEOFFREY BRAY LINDLEY (OC 1923)
Worked for Commonwealth Oil Refineries.

JAMES GORDON MAWSON (OC 1922)
Coroner of Cooma.

AENEAS JOHN LINDSAY MCDONNELL (OC 1922)
One of the Monuments Men.

WILLIAM THOMAS MEALE (OC 1923)
Honorary Secretary of the Cootamundra Golf Club.

WILFRED NEVILLE JOHNSON (OC 1922)
Followed in his father’s footsteps to become a Chartered Accountant.

RICHARD MAXWELL MEARES (OC 1923)
Studied Engineering at the University of Sydney.

HENRY CHARLES HUNTER WHITE (OC 1922)
Veterinary Scientist at the Glenfield Veterinary Research Station.

GEOFFREY GOULBURN ASHTON (OC 1922)
Member of the family polo team of four brothers who dominated Australian polo in the 1930’s. In England they won 17 of 25 tournaments and in the USA five out of seven.

GEOFFREY CARROLL (OC 1923)
Returned to work at Cranbrook and later Geelong Grammar School.

REGINALD ERROL MAFFEY (OC 1923)
Followed in his father’s footsteps to become a doctor.

JOHN LESLIE MANSFIELD (OC 1923)
Architect, later the President of the Town and Country Planning Institute.

MACGREGOR MURRAY SCOTT (OC 1923)
An enthusiastic supporter of the Riverina Movement - which advocated for the secession of the Riverina region from NSW.

GREGORY EDWIN WALKER-TAYLOR (OC 1923)
Lieutenant in the Australian Royal Navy.

MAURICE CAY (OC 1925)
Studied medicine at Edinburgh University.

THOMAS WALTER MITCHELL (OC 1924)
First Old Cranbrookian to become a Cabinet Minister.

WILLIAM VERO READ (OC 1925)
Followed in his father’s footsteps to become a solicitor.

DAVID GELL ELDER (OC 1925)
Champion Golfer.

RICHARD NEVILLE CAMERON STACY (OC 1924)
Regrader, buyer, and seller of wool in a partnership with a Mr Stuart and Mr Evans.

ALEXANDER JEFFREY JOBSON (OC 1924)
Worked on the staff of *The Economist*.



MAIN BLOCK
(PERKINS)
CLASSROOM 1933