

**Dr. Frans A Henskens**  
**BMath, DipEd, DipCompSc, PhD,JP**  
**(1960 - 1963)**

*I started at the school in 4th Class in 1960. The teacher was Mr Tennant, and the headmaster was either Mr Bensley or he had only just been replaced by Mr Hall. Mr Tennant loved cricket, and had little time for boys who were not good at sport in general and cricket in particular. I was told by my fellow students that no-one could beat John Jenkins in the exams because his father Jim was president of the P&C.*

*We lived at 4 Bingle Street, Newcastle, which is still my parents' home. My sister Ineke started in 2nd class the same year, and my sister Marianne and brothers Peter and Alister also attended the school.*

*We caught the Hill Bus to school each morning and either caught the same bus home, or saved the threepence fare by walking home. If I walked it was up Church Street into Newcomen Street, thence past the Obelisk into Bingle Street.*

*My friends from school were Adrian Rooney ( who lived in Watt Street as I recall between Church and King), John Jenkins (who lived in a lane off Church Street), Tony Nico ( who lived in a part of an old mansion in Church Street), Andrew Bailey ( who lived at the top of Brown Street), David Smith ( who lived in The Terrace) and Michael Hansen ( who lived in the Army caretaker's cottage next to the fort in King Edward Park). During 5th class I was friends with Julian Shaw, whose father was a doctor and who lived in the flats near Newcastle Casualty (Wirraway?)... he left after*

*that year.*

*Mr Bensley was the headmaster while I was in 4th and 5th classes. He caned me (and I think Adrian Rooney) once for looking under the corrugated iron side of the girls' toilet ( as I recall our excuse was that we were looking for a ball). Mr Hall became headmaster in 1963 and taught me in 6th class.*

*I recall that there were OA students and deaf students at the school. One of them had the surname Gardiner I think, and he was much bigger and older than the rest of us. He was advanced enough to shave, and proudly showed off his body hair and adolescent genitalia in the boys' toilet.*

*I recall that we used to have assemblies in the lower quadrangle, where we would salute the flag and sing "God Save The Queen". I can still play that (and nothing else) on the recorder.*

*Garbage duty was good because those on it had an excuse to spend time out of the class around the back of the boys' toilet. I don't remember that we did anything much except waste class-time. I vaguely remember that there was tea duty as well (mainly done by the girls) in the staff room at the bottom of the stairs.*

*We were provided with milk each day in the shed in the lower quadrangle. Lots of kids brought flavouring from home, but I don't recall that was very well liked by the teachers. The milk was delivered in crates to the shed and was sometimes warm by the time we drank it.*

*Class was very strict. We had to put up our hands and wait to be invited to speak. I don't remember getting into much trouble in class, but I was probably a bit of a "goody-goody". I recall that there was a lot of rote learning. It was, for instance, a real revelation for me when I realised that you could calculate the number of feet in a mile (5280) by multiplying the number of yards (1760) by the number of feet in a yard(3). I cannot remember such relationships ever being taught.*

*We had a school musical held in the Cathedral Hall during 6th class. I scored the male lead, Captain Soot. The two most beautiful girls in the school as far as I was concerned were Ailene Skinner and Pamela Scrutton (Delma May was also pretty nice). Pamela was the female lead. The musical was basically about a pack of dirty uncouth males and a group of lovely clean and polite females. The words of my song were "I'm Captain Soot of the Soot Brigade, I come from the Land of Dirt, My clothes are tattered, My boots are torn, Mr manners are rude and curt, I'm always dressed in a uniform that everyone understands, I'm Captain Soot of the Soot Brigade, Just look at my face and hands". We boys added to our make-up by rubbing ourselves all over the powdery paint on the hall's backstage walls. I think the plot was that the girls saved the boys from a terrible fate in the end. The only other performance-related thing I can remember was playing Rachmaninoff's "Prelude" in C Sharp (on piano) for the parents at the end of 6th Class.*

*The playground had well-defined boys' and girls' areas, and it was against the school rules to go into the other sex's area. This was a problem for us as we often played cricket in the playground. The top playground was hallowed territory only used by 6th and I think 5th class children.*

*I remember that at one stage we would walk around the playground with arms over each others' shoulders singing "Who wants a game of cowboys and itchy bums" and thinking that was rather risqué. There was another short craze which involved making the foulest smelling substance. Some yo-yo experts visited the school from Coco Cola. The spinning disks with a loop of string through them were also popular for a while. The ones from the shop could be eaten when they broke, but they could also be made from big buttons and thin string or cotton.*

*There was a shop just down the road in Bolton Street, but it was out of bounds. The more daring children would sneak down there at lunch time. If you had a lunch pass you could go home for lunch. Adrian Rooney had one, but my mother always made my lunch. I regularly, however, threw my lunch away and went to Adrian's house for his grandmother's delicious jaffles.*

*We wore a school shirt, shorts, long socks, tie and black shoed to school, supplemented by a jumper in winter.*

*I don't remember a lot about regular school sport. I recall being at the flat area of King Edward Park over the road from Bingle Street and The Terrace playing cricket with Mr Tennant, and being abused by him because of my incompetence. I remember playing a game of rugby league as prop, I think at National Park. We did swimming lessons at Newcastle Baths each year.*

*For recreation, exploring the tunnels in King Edward Park, playing in the Cathedral graveyard (then overgrown with bamboo and very sandy), climbing the cliffs, playing in our cubby house cooking pots of tea on the cliff-face just south of the fort, or going to the beach stick in my mind. We had some great shang-hai fights around the forts. As long as we were home in time for dinner and kept our parents informed of our approximate whereabouts we could wander about largely un-supervised. There was certainly not the fear of abduction or worse that pervades current society. About the most unusual thing we ever came across was the occasional group of Watt Street inmates being taken for a walk in the park. The Hill around Nesca Parade and where NBN Television now stands had no houses then and was a good source of fossil leaves. We called the area over Wolfe Street from The Obelisk "The Paddock". Horses used to graze there, and there was an overgrown dirt road which must have once joined The Terrace to the top end of Brown and Pitt Streets. Sometimes we collected horse manure from The Paddock and sold it for fertiliser. For a time Roger Clements lived next door in no2 Bingle Street, and I remember being at the beach with him when we both tried to learn to stand on a surfboard... he went on to become one of Newcastle's best surfers.*

*I got either sixpence or a shilling a week pocket money, plus any bus fares I saved by walking home after school. We also made a bit of money by picking up any soft drink bottles we came across and collecting the deposit from the corner shop. I also collected old newspapers and sold them to the fruit and vegetable shop after transporting them there on my billy-cart. I had a penchant for cream-buns, and spent most of my funds on them. I also used my savings to buy birthday and Christmas presents, and for games of pin-ball.*

*I practised piano and violin before and after school, so did not play with other children much during the week. On Sunday nights my sister and I went next door to watch an hour of TV on the neighbour's television set. I remember liking Mr Ed, My Favourite Martian and Disney Land. I remember that the Rooneys had the first television that I ever saw, and that it cost a lot of money.*

# Newcastle East Parents & Citizens Association

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10TH DECEMBER, 1963.

MASTER FRANS HENSKENS,  
NEWCASTLE EAST SCHOOL.

DEAR FRANS,

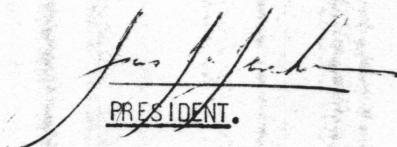
ON THURSDAY YOU WILL BE LEAVING THE SCHOOL. YOU ARE GOING ON TO SECONDARY SCHOOL AND ENTERING A NEW ERA IN YOUR YOUNG LIFE. WE ARE SORRY TO SEE YOU GO, BUT ARE PLEASSED TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED YOUR PRIMARY EDUCATION AND ARE READY TO GO ON TO FURTHER EDUCATION IN A HIGHER GRADE.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED YOUR STAY AT NEWCASTLE EAST, AND THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS LOOK BACK ON THOSE YEARS WITH FOND MEMORIES. NEWCASTLE EAST, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1816, IS NEWCASTLE'S OLDEST SCHOOL, AND YOU CAN BE PROUD OF ITS OUTSTANDING RECORD IN BOTH SCHOLASTIC AND SPORTING SPHERES.

THE TEACHERS, PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION, AND MOTHERS' CLUB WISH YOU WELL, AND HOPE YOU ARE VERY HAPPY IN YOUR NEW SCHOOL.

WITH KINDEST REGARDS AND BEST WISHES,

HEADMASTER.

  
PRESIDENT.

  
SECRETARY.

(5) > 7/4/61

# ULTY IONE

## Mad Hatters' Parade

Imagination was given full rein in the odd creations worn by these children at Newcastle East Public School today. They were taking part in a Mad Hatters' parade.



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## Man And Woman Charged

