

My Years at Baradene 1941-1973

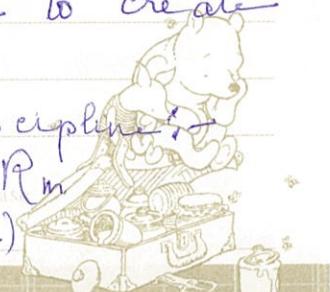
Except for various periods teaching in our Schools in Sydney and Brisbane and some years as Superior, Baradene has been my base and 'home' for sixty or seventy years. My ministry was teaching principally with young children, although for a short period, I taught in the Senior School, ending up as Boarder Mistress: 1970-1973. Mainly I taught "Christian Doctrine" as it was called then.

From the very beginning, there were Boarders and ever since 1910 their numbers have increased, - and day-scholars also, until today, there are 900+. In 1986, the Boarding School was closed to the sorrow of all --

In 1949 I started my teaching life at Baradene, in the Junior School. I cannot remember just how many were in the Junior school, (between 80-90??). I do remember there were 20 boarders, whose ages ranged between 4-10!!

As the Junior School lived apart from Senior School, it was possible to create a more homely atmosphere while maintaining a certain amount of discipline:

- Silent "ranks" to the dining Rm
- to the dormitory (at bed-time)



- in the dormitory, down to breakfast and to classes.

- talking was not allowed in the dormitory or bathroom or study,

As time went on the junior ^{day} boarders grew in numbers, (but not the junior boarders)

but the numbers never became ^{so} big, so "it was impossible to retain

a family atmosphere with all its "ups and downs", transgressions & repentance,

shared joys and sorrows, exhilarating games of cricket & Rounders or if wet,

sitting on the floor playing Knucklebones

& reading. These years 'in the fifties and sixties were happy years. - The

pace of life was gentler - plenty of work but also times for fun. At various

times we had two ponies, four donkeys,

& a pet lamb. The children loved the

donkeys. They groomed them, fed them

and enjoyed riding them. Very often though, resourcing to the "Push-Pull-Carrot"

method.

At 3.30 the junior day Scholars went home, so "we were a smaller family together for the rest of the days and evenings until

9 a.m. next day. - For the older children there was supervised study while the 4 to 6 year olds had 'nursery' tea at 5 p.m. follow-

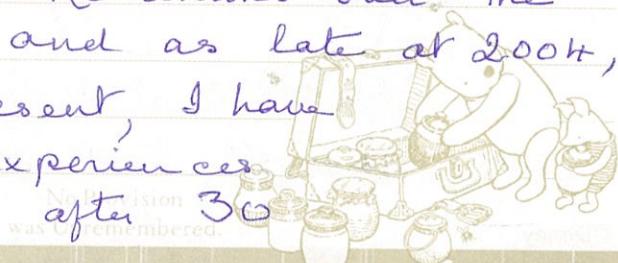
by baths; bed time story, a tuck-in and a good night kiss from Mum & Dad!

- In my later years at Baradene I taught in ^{the} Senior School, then three years as Boarder Mistress - After a break in Sydney, I returned to Baradene as Superior in 1978 - 81 - After a couple more breaks, I finally left Baradene in 1997 for Sydney and Retirement.

Many outstanding events took place during these years - In 1986 the Boarding School was closed, the end of a happy era. A couple of years later the main school block was gutted, strengthened against earthquake and rebuilt and re-designed from the inside after the closure of the Boarding School - but that is another story.

I have elaborated on my early teaching life at Baradene - Why? Because for me, my rôle was that of a "mother figure" and the bonds that grew between us all, boarders and day scholars alike have been unique and enduring.

At various Alumnae Re-unions over the intervening years, and as late as 2004, at which I was present, I have had many moving experiences of being recognised after 30



or more years and felt the strength and the love forged so many years ago. It was like taking up where we left off! With many I have kept in touch and shared their joys and sorrows. They look back on those years with love and appreciation and even if they remember battles of wills, very rarely is there any bitterness. They were special years, in another Age, when life was simple and simple joys were enjoyed.

Finally, as I look back, I am lost in a maze of beautiful children, classroom activities, bringing God into their lives in the study of Nature, ponies, donkeys, Bees, 'Baa's, the lamb, times of leisure, special feast-day holiday, striving for perfection in "feast" day books, special enterprises — and watching them grow and mature. Yes, of course, there were times of difficulties and pain of one kind or another, & disappointments. This is an integral part of life. I prayed for them then and I pray for them now, all the students in our care now, "that they "may grow in wisdom and grace wherever they are and whatever they do."

Baradene has always been my second home.

"For all that has been, thanks.
For all that will be" Yes.