

THE 1925 NEW MASTERS

Three men joined the staff in 1925. *The Albertian* of that year reported that

“Messrs. E.M. Blaiklock, B.A., S.F. Meiklejohn, M.A., and S. Black joined the staff of the School.”

Each, in his way, had a short tenure and each was a remarkable man.



Edward Musgrave Blaiklock completed an MA in Latin and French with first class honours in his first year here. He introduced soccer into the School and was instrumental in inaugurating a secondary school competition.

He was encouraged to study Greek and left here after three years to take a lectureship at Auckland University College.

Blaiklock wrote a thesis on Euripides and was awarded a LittD by The University of New Zealand.

In 1947 he was appointed Professor of Classics. He was also a lay preacher at the Baptist Tabernacle.

To quote WR Richardson, his biographer in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*

“... Blaiklock had by now established himself as a natural communicator who could build a close rapport with an audience, carrying them along on the current of his own enthusiasm. He was helped in this by a handsome countenance, an athletic build, a strong clear voice, a commanding presence, backed up by a fluent command of English and a wide reading in his own and related fields.”



For many years he wrote elegant columns for Wilson and Horton publications, under the pen-name Grammaticus.

He also had an international reputation as a biblical scholar. He died in 1983.

Sholto Kairakau Black, like Blaiklock, completed an MA, in English and Economics, while on the staff. He left at the end of 1928 to teach at Timaru Boys' High School where he stayed for 10 years. He moved to Melbourne and became an assistant master at Haileybury at Brighton Beach for three years before being appointed the fourth Headmaster.

As his biographer on *Te Ara*, Mere Tunks, mentions:

“Black had the difficult time of the Second World War to cope with, as well as a small emerging school with few resources. He did an enormous amount of work for very little pay. Black believed that the college should provide a cultured environment and a form of teaching that nurtured Christian beliefs. In his view, in addition to fostering scholarship, schools should encourage humility, humour, kindness, forbearance, helpfulness, trust and loyalty.

After the war he successfully proposed to remove the cadet corps and encourage more art, music and drama. By the time he retired in 1953 the College had an excellent reputation.”



Sholto Black with Haileybury boys in 1942

Black returned to Auckland and was, for a time, a relieving teacher at Henderson High School.

He was soon headhunted by Sir David Henry, Managing Director of New Zealand Forest Products, to move to Tokoroa as Director of Community Services. He was re-energised, coordinating housing for forestry workers, serving on the Tokoroa High School Board of Governors and the Anglican vestry and undertaking speaking engagements to many groups. He was an advocate for social justice. He touched all bases. He died in 1963.

There is a continuation with Haileybury. Derek Scott arrived here, from Australia, to his last School year at Mount Albert Grammar School in 1982. From a standing start he was in the Cricket 1st XI, Captain of the Rugby 1st XV and a prefect. After some university work he returned to Australia and later became the overall principal of Haileybury, which has four campuses in Melbourne and one in China.

Sergeant Frederick Meiklejohn gained a Junior University Scholarship and gained the John Tinline Scholarship for English and graduated with first-class honours in English. He was President of the Student Association. After two years here he acted as a lecturer in English – during the Professor's absence. He returned in 1928. He had little more than a year left. He died of pneumonia on 25 March 1930.

The 1930 *The Albertian* reported that:

"A man of high attainment he commanded the respect of his pupils and promised to have a very successful career as a teacher. His quick sympathies could not but endear him to colleagues and boys alike.

"In the playing-field Mr Meiklejohn took up the task of organising and controlling the School Hockey and this branch of school work will live always as a memorial to his untiring efforts.

"The measure of our sadness at the early death [he was 27] makes greater our sympathy with his parents who lived lovingly and proudly in their hopes of a bright future. To them the loss of a son made harder because of a loss of service so early ended."

This eulogy is unsigned but the style is that of the Head of English – John Hooper Harvey.

His death notice in *The New Zealand Herald* (26 March 1930) ends with:

"Funeral will leave his parents residence for Waikumete Crematorium at 2p.m. tomorrow (Thursday). Friends please accept this intimation."



There was an obituary piece in the *Herald* (27 March 1930 p16) which ended with:

"At a meeting of the Auckland Grammar School Board yesterday the Chairman, Professor A.P.W. Thomas, said Mr Meiklejohn was a very popular master. It was decided to forward a letter of sympathy to the parents of Mr Meiklejohn."

The School's trophy for the Best Player in the 1st XI Hockey (Boys) is still awarded as The Meiklejohn Memorial Cup.

He is the second young man to die in office. In the year in which Meiklejohn and his colleagues joined the staff, David William Fell M.A. died. Fell joined the staff in 1923 and died on 27 January 1925. He was 26.

So Meiklejohn was the second person to have a brass plaque in the hall for masters who died in office.



These three masters of 1925, despite their short stay, were the most talented group of new men in any one year, with two biographies in *Te Ara*, and the other with high ability and a life cut short.

Brian Murphy