

THE BOXER

No, not the Simon and Garfunkel song, rather the pugilist Dudley Walter Rollinson (1934-1939), When he arrived he was put into 3B under the tender ministrations of Mr CT ('Sticky') Harris, then on to 4B with Mr CP ('Pop') Worley. In Lower 5 he had the gruff, no-nonsense Mr JG ('Butch') Brown as a form master followed in Upper 5 Latin by the energetic and booming Mr HL ('Jas') Calder.

At the end of Term 2 (20 August 1937) he left for Sacred Heart College. Kerry Plamus, in charge of communications for the Sacred Heart College Old Boys' Association, quoting the living schools' sports computer, Brother Michael, said that they had a record of him arriving on 7 September 1937 and giving a Mr Kareios of 72 Grafton Road as a guardian. (He was enrolled with us as the son of Mr HJ Rollinson, 7 Wolseley Avenue, Morningside). The encyclopaedic Tony Waters, author of *Confortare: A history of Sacred Heart College, Auckland 1903-2003* (pg97) wrote:

"Such was the rivalry among boxers that one of Mt Albert Grammar's champion boxers, Dudley Rollinson, enrolled at Sacred Heart in the third term of 1937 for what is believed to be the sole purpose of beating college champion Rod McKenzie and taking the college heavyweight boxing title --- after winning the title he left the college before the end of the year [Kerry says 8 October 1937] and returned to Mt Albert Grammar."

Tony also noted that Rollinson's "father was a Lebanese Catholic". That was probably the mysterious 'guardian', Mr Kareios.

After a month at Sacred Heart College he returned to Mount Albert Grammar School and yet another year in the fifth form. This time in Senior 5 with Mr HL ('Herb') Towers. He was a Prefect, a rower, a rugby player, and no one would fight him so he was unopposed boxing champion. That year, 1938, was the School's greatest sporting year. We really did win everything. The even-tempered Headmaster Gamble said in his report for 1938:

"---we can properly view with satisfaction that in team-work the school figured with unusual prominence this year."

Dud Rollinson had a sixth year here in 6BC(i) with Mr W ('Granny') Caradus. It stood him in very good stead. He was Head Prefect, a member of the First XV, a member of the Senior Athletics team (he won the shot put), he was in the choir. Sergeant - Major of B Company, Captain of Rowing and, of course Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

The Albertian 1939 (pg54) reported that:

"---in presenting the school Heavyweight Boxing Champion, D.W. Rollinson with his prizes, Mr Bush congratulated him on being the Auckland Cruiser-weight champion. Rollinson had missed only by a fraction the New Zealand Championship at Invercargill."

The same year's magazine (pg22) reporting the Rowing Head of the Harbour, over three quarters of a mile, said:

"The runner of Number seven's [Rollinson's] seat broke putting him completely out of action. Realising that his useless weight was a hindrance to the crew he

threw his oar out and dived after it. By this time Sacred Heart had increased their lead to three lengths.”

Sacred Heart College could be excused for thinking that it could not have happen to a more apt person.

There is a short biography of Dud Rollinson in *Tradition and Change: Mount Albert Grammar School: the First Seventy-Five years*. (pg389) The sports-based entries were compiled by the late sports' historian NAC McMillan.

“--- New Zealand Universities heavyweight champion, 1941. Bad eyesight precluded him from war service.” McMillan mentioned that Rollinson ran a bus service and cinema in Waiuku during and after the war. He was New Zealand light-heavyweight champion 1947 and 1948. He coached boxing and worked as a sales representative. He went to Sydney where he died in 1983.

For one with poor eyesight to be such a determined boxer, a sport requiring lightning reflexes, and to run a bus service and cinema, both relying on visual acuity, is a measure of a man who did not shrink from challenges.

Brian Murphy