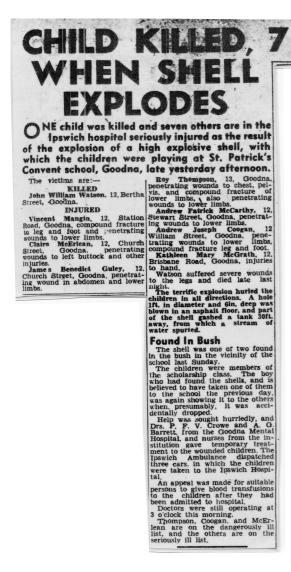
Centenary Snippets

Update No. 13

A War Time Tragedy 1943



'A Tragic Event' is a chapter in our history book detailing the explosion in the school that killed one student and seriously wounded the other 7 students in the Scholarship class. Clair McErlean, Kath McGrath, John Watson, Andy McCarthy, Joe Coogan and Jim Guley had been together at St Patrick's since year one. Vince Mangin and Roy Thompson joined the class at a later time. A number of boys began throwing the bomb (brought to school for show and tell) to see who could throw it the "The rocket exploded with a hardest and furthest. deafening noise and a flash of blinding light. Hot jagged metal fragments of shrapnel flew in every direction, becoming embedded in the timberwork of the building and puncturing the water tank in several places. A crater about 150mm deep and 300mm wide was blown in the asphalt." (Welcome Learning by John Browning).

Doctors and nurses were called from the Mental Hospital and all children were taken to the Ipswich General Hospital. Sadly, John Watson passed away from his injuries that night. Other students spent from a few days to three months in hospital recuperating. The coroner's finding was accidental death. No one was sued for negligence and no compensation was ever paid.

During our Centenary celebrations in 2010, a plaque will be unveiled to commemorate the scholarship class of 1943. We hope that some of the surviving members of the class will attend this ceremony. If you have contact details for surviving students or their families, please pass these details to us.