

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL ARCHIVES



THE UPDATED PREFECT'S BADGE 2018

Symbols are very important. They define institutions, and they tell the world what they stand for – they are true ‘icons’. At this school, we have three icons which tell the world all about us, who we are and what we stand for. They are: the School Shield; the three plumes or feathers of the Raukura; and the Prefect’s Badge.

The Prefect’s Badge has defined the office of Prefect at our school for 91 years. And until August, 2018, it remained completely unchanged since it was first created in 1927. But we need to go even further back to 1915 – 104 years ago – when the story of this historic badge first began.

In 1915, the year after our school was established, the boys and girls were asked to think of symbols that were meaningful to them and that they wanted their school to stand for. The symbols that they chose were: a Crown, symbolizing the Sovereign and the Government; a Lion, symbolizing courage and strength and also, at that time, British imperial dominion; a Book, symbolizing knowledge, learning and education; and a Rose, symbolizing England and English traditions. The symbols were placed onto a traditional heraldic shield and so the first part – the central shield – of our historic School Shield was created.

In 1927, two further additions were made. The Latin Motto was added in a scroll beneath the shield; and a carved Māori Head, symbolizing our proud Māori heritage, was added atop it. The School Shield, as we know it today, was thus fully created 91 years ago.

Also in 1927, two new badges were commissioned for the School: the Cap Badge, which was worn by the boys only at the centre of the original School Cap; and the Prefect's Badge. Both badges feature the central shield; the Latin Motto; the School Colours of red and gold in horizontal bands around the shield and blue inside of the shield; the School's name, which was at that time Rotorua High School; the dates of the badges' creation, A.D. 1927 – A.D. standing for the Latin phrase, Anno Domini, meaning, in the "Year of our Lord"; and two flanking stars between the School's name and the dates on the badges. The only difference between the two badges are the surrounding laurel leaves of the Prefect's Badge symbolizing leadership.

The boys' Cap Badge was worn from 1927 until the original School Cap was abolished as part of the uniform in 1972. The Prefect's Badge continued unchanged.

In August, 2016, the School Museum cabinet opposite the main office was installed. For this, I selected items of old school memorabilia to display in it. As I was placing in to it examples of an old and a modern-day Prefect's Badges I stopped and I looked at the modern-day Prefect's Badge. I asked myself two questions about the modern one: why is this badge still saying Rotorua High School on it, and where is our Māori Head atop the shield? I also thought that boys who were Prefects would want to wear a badge that represented the School they were the Prefects of – not the long-defunct Rotorua High School which had not existed since 1958 – and was also complete in terms of its design.

In mid-October, 2016, I wrote a paper for Mr. Grinter about the Prefect's Badge. I suggested to him that we really ought to update the badge by inserting Boys' into the name and adding the Māori Head atop the shield, but otherwise leave it unchanged. My paper set off a chain of events leading to updating of the Prefect's Badge in 2018.

For the first time almost 60 years we were able to award, at the Senior Prize Giving held on 2 November, 2018, the first set of updated Prefect's Badges. The boys who received the new badge were the first to wear an historic symbol and an icon of our school that includes the following changes:-

- The name on the badge is now Rotorua Boys' High School.
- The Māori Head is now in his customary position atop the shield.
- In place of the year A.D. 1927 is now our Māori name, Raukura.
- In place of the two original flanking stars there are now two plumes.

The addition of Raukura and the two plumes on the badge were Mr. Grinter's idea.

We now have a really stunning Prefect's Badge that embraces 104 years of history and tradition updated to reflect the school that we are today in the 21st century. And it is very fitting that this updated "old" badge will be properly worn for the first time by the newly appointed Prefects in 2019. Next year also marks the Diamond Jubilee of the School's re-opening as Rotorua Boys' High School in 1959, and the 105th anniversary of our establishment in 1914. Our historic Prefect's Badge has, finally, caught up with us after 60 years and it is also now complete and correct!

An example of the updated Prefect's Badge is on display in the School Museum cabinet opposite the main office.

THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL CAP 1927 – 1972



On 27 August, 2018, two new items were added to the School Museum cabinet opposite the main office. These were an original School Cap and a photograph of its late owner.

For almost 30 years now, I had been hoping to find or to come across an original boys' School Cap. I had only ever seen examples of these in old black and white photographs. In July, 2018, my search for one finally ended when Mrs. Kathy Rosser of Auckland got in touch to say that her late husband, Mr. Norman Rosser (1925-2010), who attended the Rotorua High School from 1936-1939, had proudly kept his old School Cap. She wanted to know if we might be interested in having it. I said YES!!!

The original School Cap was worn by boys only from 1927 until it was abolished as part of the school uniform in 1972. It was a cloth cap and it was coloured dark blue with red stripes – these being two of the School Colours of blue, red and gold. At the centre of the cap above the brim was placed the original Cap Badge. This badge was exactly the same as the Prefect's Badge is but without the surrounding laurel leaves. If a boy was appointed a Prefect, he would replace his Cap Badge with the Prefect's Badge on his School Cap. Both badges were, and still are, unique and distinctive designs to this school.

Mr. Rosser's cap is in remarkable condition after 82 years. It only misses a button at the center of its top. It is also most probably the only one of it now in existence making it all the more special. Beside the cap, I have displayed a photograph of Mr. Rosser. It was taken of him during World War II while he served as a Fighter-Pilot in the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

We are very grateful to Mrs. Kathy Rosser for her wonderful donations to us.



Alexander Turnbull Library

Hon. R.A. Wright
1863 – 1947

While reading a book recently, I came across the above photograph of Robert Alexander Wright. We should, I hope, all know who he was and the role that he played in our school's history 91 years ago.

He was, of course, the man who laid the Foundation Stone of A Block on 12 April, 1927. He returned to the School the following year to then officially open the new Rotorua High School building on 9 February, 1928.

Wright was M.P. for the Wellington South electorate from 1908-1911, when he was defeated. He was returned to Parliament as M.P. for the Wellington Suburbs and Country electorate from 1914-1919 and then the Wellington Suburbs electorate from 1919-1938. He served as Minister of Education in the Reform Government of Prime Minister J.G. Coates from 1926-1928. While he was sitting in Parliament, he also served as the Mayor of Wellington from 1921-1925. Being a Member of Parliament and also serving as the Mayor of a major city at the same time would not be possible to do now!

Mr. K.J. Lyall

SCHOOL ARCHIVIST & HISTORIAN