AN INSIGHT INTO THE HISTORY OF

SYDNEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

An Academically Selective School for Boys

BY ERIC RONG

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Sydney Technical High School, colloquially abbreviated to "Sydney Tech" or just "Tech", is without doubt one of Rockdale City's finest schools. It provides an academically selective education for boys and is located in the Bexley section of Forest Road (near Eagle Boys Pizza!).

You may have seen Sydney Tech once or twice, or maybe every week when you go the south for shopping. Perhaps one of your friends or siblings – or even yourself – attends the school. But it would not be very likely for you reading this to have a substantial knowledge about Sydney Technical High School's history.

And, of course, it's absolutely unnecessary to have a substantial knowledge about Sydney Technical High School's history. Having such knowledge in your mind probably won't assist you with any situation which will occur in your life, nor will it give you a great deal of educational benefit.

Then why am I writing this? Of course, there's that Ron Rathbone competition people are talking about. But what actually matters is that history is *fun*. Writing history is fun, and learning history is fun. Where did the "Technical" part of "Sydney Technical High School" come from? Was the site of the school always where it is now? What is the school like today, compared to before? Are there any famous people who studied at Sydney Tech? There are a myriad of questions that we will explore, and ultimately answer, in this essay, which will mainly focus on the earlier years of Sydney Tech.

This document is divided into three information sections: *Past*, *Present* and *People*, and these are further subdivided for easier reading. Please also note that here "Sydney Tech" always refers to Sydney Technical High School, not Sydney Technical College or Sydney Technical Day School. (Yes, there are other "Sydney Technical" schools! You can read on to find out more.)
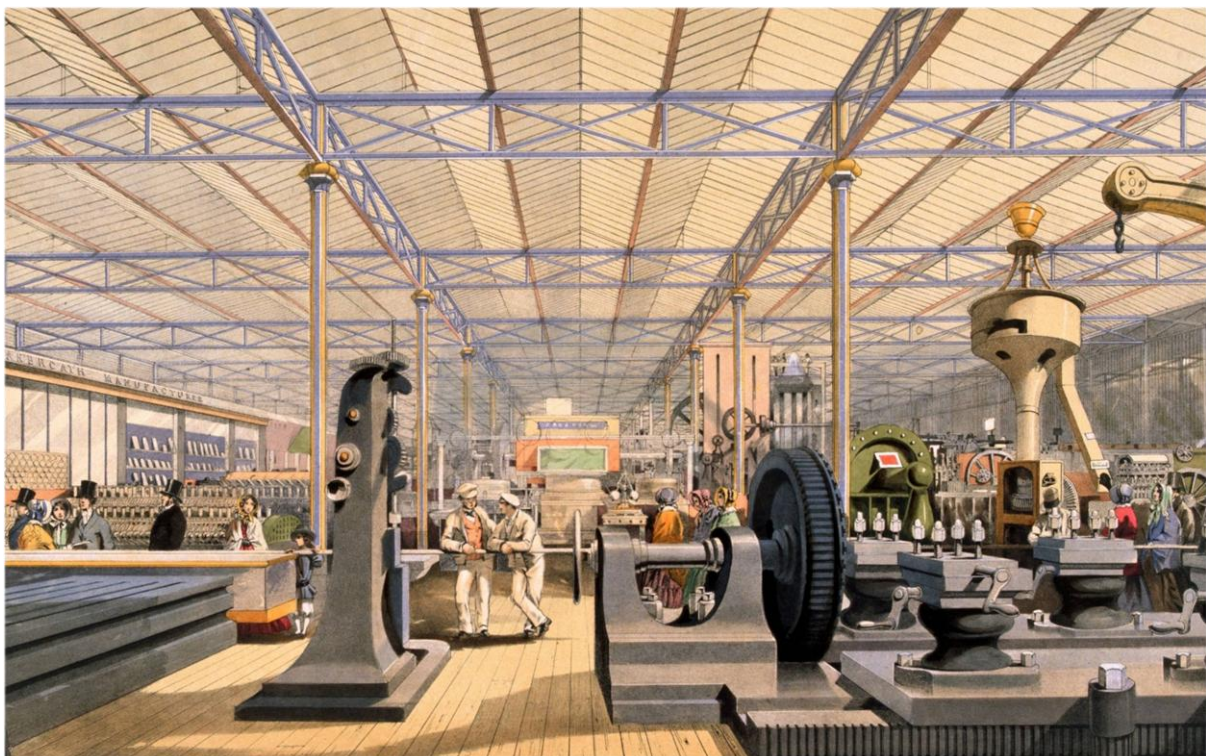

Picture from sths.nsw.edu.au

Sydney Technical High School has been located at three different sites since its foundation – Ultimo House, Albion Street in Paddington and the current site on the border of Bexley and Hurstville. It has an interesting history that we will be exploring in this section.

BEGINNINGS

Sydney Tech did not simply appear - it was a result of ideas of education changing and evolving.

Industry and Technology (1851-1907)

In 1851, the London Great Exhibition, which was a massive showcase of culture and industry, sparked interest of machines and industrial work in the New South Wales colony, and hence the importance of a technical education. However, at that time, there was not really a concern for establishing such a school. Technical training was vastly overshadowed by primary education – literature, languages, mathematics and music. In only a few places were the idea of a technical education institute being manifested, with only one school teaching both general and technical subjects in 1866.

A modern day depiction of part of the London Great Exhibition (http://0.tqn.com)

This attitude rapidly began to change, however, as a series of events involving the Gold Rushes, the growth in popularity of ports around Sydney and the development of a railway system led to an increased need for engineers and workmen to support the thriving Sydney city, and hence an increased need for technical education. Sciences now became a compulsory part of university entrance examinations, and more colleges were including technical subjects.

One of these educational institutes was the Sydney Technical College situated at Ultimo, which grew out of the Working Men's College in 1882. It offered courses such as Agriculture, Architecture, Civil Engineering, Dress Making, Geology and a motley of other subjects. This school's student numbers increased at lightning-speed, paralleling the Sydney's aforementioned economic growth.

Sydney Technical College at Ultimo (Flickr user: Powerhouse Museum)

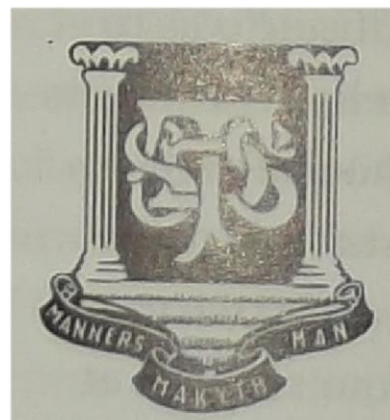Let's fast forward to 1901. In this eventful year, the Commonwealth of Australia was founded. In addition, perhaps more relevant to this topic, the Public Teachers' Association met at the Sydney Town Hall. As well as acknowledging a number of flaws in the system of education, they realised the value of a technical education and noted this in their fourteen requests to the Department of Education. Item Two asked "that a

thorough organisation and extension of technical education be advocated" and Eight "that the question of Continuation classes [for pupils wishing to undergo technical training] be considered".

Thus, in 1903 following a Royal Commission into the topic of NSW Education praising technical education, these classes were established in Sydney Technical College and ran during the evenings for any interested students.

Sydney Technical Day School (1908-10)

In 1908, these classes evolved into a proper school – Sydney Technical Day School, which used the buildings of Sydney Technical College to operate. It opened with 30 pupils, two thirds of which had attained scholarships. This school was made under the decision of John William Turner, the Superintendent of Technical Education at the time.

Official Emblem of STDS

Both boys and girls could choose from a range of subjects, most of them specific to their sex. There was Elementary Science, Technical Drawing, Woodwork and Metalwork for the boys and Domestic Science, Dressmaking and Millinery for the girls, along with the common subjects of English and Mathematics. Students could complete a two-year course at the day school, provided they were above 13 years of age. The courses provided an alternative for children unable to dish out loads of money to attend university but who still wanted to have a higher-paying job than a clerk.

It was in that year that the motto *Manners Makyth Man* was chosen for Sydney Technical Day School, and this unusual (not in Latin!) motto remains the adage of Sydney Technical High School today. However, "manners" did not encompass only the modern definition – it referred to someone's good character, altruism, intelligence and logical skills.

The Sydney Technical Day School gradually adopted a more selective process for enrolment, as scholarships became available for those who could not usually afford to undertake a technical education at the school. In 1910, around 100 students were attending the school, a majority of them boys.

Ultimo before Sydney Tech (pre-1911)

Before 1910, Ultimo House, after which the suburb had been named, was the country home of Dr. John Harris, Surgeon of the NSW Corps (Army). In October 1910 it was sold to Sydney Technical College as part of the land bought by the college to support the growth of its student numbers and the addition of the Sydney Technical Day School. Frankly, it was dilapidated, but Superintendent Turner did not *intend* (haha) to demolish it. Instead, from 1910-1911 it was used as a lunch and recreation area for Sydney Technical College and Sydney Technical Day School students.

Ultimo before major development (dictionaryofsydney.org)

Birth of Sydney Technical High School (1910-11)

In 1910, John Turner proposed for Sydney Technical Day School to become a high school providing free secondary education for students wishing to learn technical subjects. After all, the students had settled in nicely, the teaching was of high calibre and the school established itself resolutely. This proposal was accepted by the NSW Director of Education Peter Board not long after.

However, one cannot form a high school simply by snapping their fingers. The first thing for Turner to do was to search for someone to run the future school efficiently and provide a quality technical education. It just happened that a man with a name very similar to his worked just a few minutes away and was definitely apt for the job – John Williams, the Acting Headmaster of Sydney Boys High School at the time.

During this period of preparation and organisation, Turner also made a prospectus for the upcoming Sydney Technical High School which outlined the location, aims, subjects, facilities and admission process. It was to be located at the Ultimo site, and pupils were to "have ample opportunities for scientific and practical instruction" to prepare "for the engineering trades and professions and architecture", alongside "subjects purely of cultural value". School fees were 1 pound 1 shilling per term and would include access to the library of the Technical College as well as their own small library.

On the 29th March 1911, Williams was officially appointed headmaster by the Department of Public Instruction, and on the Monday 3rd April a few days later Sydney Technical Day School was officially given high school status. This is the point where Sydney Technical High School truly came into existence. What had begun as the rise of industry and engineering in Sydney had resulted in the birth of the first technical high school. But more changes were set to come...

The First Years (1911-13)

Sydney Tech's first Empire Day (now Commonwealth Day) celebration in 1911 (sths.nsw.edu.au)

Sydney Technical High School began with a busy timetable from, rather unusually, 9:30am to 4pm. This was to cater to the travelling times of students from the far-reached suburbs of Sydney and even those coming in from country New South Wales. After all, it was a one-in-a-kind selective school providing an education that could benefit students for life. The most important subjects were Maths, Science and Drawing and it would not be a good idea to arrive at Tech not being above average at them. Some other subjects included English, History, Geography, Woodwork, Millinery and a variety of others.

When STHS began in 1911, it had 113 boys and 15 girls in attendance taught by 11 specialised staff mainly 'borrowed' from the Technical College. Even by the end of the year though, these numbers rose to 147 boys and 31 girls, so Williams added two extra teaching staff in Term 3. By 1912, scholarships were available, over 400 students attended Tech and extra teachers in Metalwork and Woodwork were hired, though teachers at Tech were still being subjected to extremely crammed schedules. One example is another person with a "William" in his name, William McNiven. This maths teacher applied for short-term sick leave in August 1912, reporting stress and weight loss from teaching up to 29 out of 32 periods per week as well as supervising several extracurricular activities.

Speaking of extracurricular activities, which we will talk more about in the next section, every Wednesday afternoon sport was held for all students, and other activities running outside of school hours included Debating, First Aid, Cadets, Chess and Choir.

In 1913, John Turner passed away and was replaced as Superintendent of Technical Education by James Nangle, who continued to strive to improve technical education's quality. That year also marked the arrival of a new teacher at the school.

Over the years, headmaster Williams channelled his beliefs about education and the way students should be taught into the development of Sydney Technical High School. For example, he voiced his opinions on the skills to be taught in Metalwork, the quality of the industrial training in relation to the Technical College as well as the raising of intellectual and moral young men. In addition, Williams made changes to help support a leader rather than follower attitude and encourage creativity rather than imitation in these manual subjects.

Although he also wanted a degree of freedom from Sydney Technical College, it was inevitable to have to rely on their facilities, equipment and buildings. Thus, classes in Sydney Tech were scattered all over the campus in Ultimo – Chemistry down at Jones Street, Technical Drawing in the Mechanical Drawing Section, Metalwork and Woodwork all the way at the back of the College... This presumably caused a great deal of hassle for teachers, students and Williams, but it wasn't going to get in the way of a unique, thriving school providing the best education possible.

Headmaster John Williams welcomes a new student (sths.nsw.edu.au)

During the War (1914-18)

The First World War broke out in 1914, although this did not particularly affect Sydney Tech (although some construction at the Technical College had to be stopped for lack of money). However, an important change did occur between 1913 and 1915. Beginning

A girls' class at Tech (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School*)

from February 1913, all of the girls in Sydney Technical High School began to be transferred to Fort Street Girls High, to the despair of the 400 male pupils of Tech. This even included the headmaster's own daughter, Amber Williams. And from then on, Sydney Tech was a boys-only school.

As promised earlier, we will now talk about the myriad of 3:55pm extracurricular activities offered by the school in its Ultimo times. The first and foremost was sports. For a small fee, boys could join the Sports Union and participate in soccer, rugby, cricket, swimming, etc. with training and matches occurring on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

There was also Debating, which although was deemed "dead" in 1915 revived itself the following year, Choir, which was run by senior students, Rifle Club, even though ammunition was short due to the war, and Cadet Corps. Students could also choose to be taught First Aid and Life Saving in their time after school.

In 1915, the first school anthem was written, to be sung to the tune of "British Grenadiers". The three verses are shown below.

All hail the day that we unfold

The azure and the moon.

The Great Tech High's banner old,

The flag we're proud to own,

Hail to the school that moulds their men

To serve their country true

By land and sea, with sword and pen

With mace and gavel too.

Well speed the youth that she hath taught

This world's great work to face,

To make the road and hold the fort

For our succeeding race.

Fair be her motto, now as then,

When Wykeham first it gave

To his young men in his great school,

Far out across the wave.

For 'Manners Makyth Man' shallstill

Our conduct good dictate

And train in us the steadfast will

To scorn the blows of fate.

All hail the day, all hail the school

All hail our motto, too.

For we shall make it aye our rule

To keep that percept true.

By the end of the war in 1918, many Old Boys had been killed or wounded. Some of those who had served came to visit and tell stories to the students, and an Honour Roll was built in Sydney Tech, which had definitely garnered many good results from students over the years despite the difficulties that the site of the school imposed.

Goodbye Ultimo (1919-24)

Further construction in the Technical College confined the High School's space even more in 1919. As their needs grew, Tech's conditions worsened. They had worn-out buildings, loud noises from the College, lack of good sports fields, an abundance of tiring stairs and an extremely confusing layout of buildings. The idea that Sydney Tech would get a new school grounds soon was not unheard of.

The school journal writers joked about it – *"Ultimo for sale, will exchange for dog kennel"* – but it was an increasingly serious issue. The boys' humorous attitudes somehow helped to alleviate the stress of the poor conditions in Tech, but action needed to occur. Previously, politicians had made empty promises and excused themselves on funding issues, but the protests by both students and teachers relentlessly advocated for some change.

From the years 1919 to 1924, hope rose and then fell again, rose and fell, and rose and fell. In 1921, a new Centennial Park site was proposed but the idea quickly fell to ruins again. It seemed that there was little hope for the students in these poor conditions. However, in 1922 some students of the Technical College were moved to East Sydney Technical College in Darlinghurst, providing a sigh of relief.

But… guess what? 1924 comes and another high school, the Junior Technical School, had moved in to the Ultimo grounds. Again and again, the problems faced by Sydney Tech appeared to have been solved, but then worsened again. The headmaster, though, always reiterated that it is the spirit and character of a school which defines it, not the buildings.

In December 1924, James Nangle (the Superintendent of Technical Education, if you don't remember) had in mind to convert Albion Street Public School in Paddington to a new Tech High, to be completed by the beginning of school the following year. This plan was eventually approved and construction began with a top priority and just a few weeks to finish the conversion of the accommodation for a new Sydney Tech. Thus, the end of the 1924 school year also marked the end of Sydney Technical High School's residence at Ultimo –14 years of growth and excellence, both from the school and the boys.

Albion St Building (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School*)

A "New" Home (1925-26)

For some time the 521 students and over 20 teachers alike seemed to be enjoying the fresh new start to their Sydney Technical High School, but the reality was that it was a run-down place constructed way back in 1894, with limited improvements, and had much less than sufficient space for a high school – especially one with such a calibre and unique course as Sydney Tech. In fact, many senior students couldn't even fit in the Paddington grounds and had to go back to the Technical College for their lessons, and the Sydney Morning Herald reported of the school that:

"...no class has a room of it own. Assembly takes up half the playground. Seating in the playground is not sufficient and many eat their lunch in their classrooms. Most of the boys sit on their casesin whatevershade they find. The school has no assembly hall. The boys assemble in the playground and speeches are made from some steps."

The Limited Playground (sths.nsw.edu.au)

The new school song, first sung on the 1st April 1926, featured the lamentation these poor physical conditions. You can read the lyrics to it on page 22.

In addition, the neighbourhood wasn't the best – there were illegal brothels across the road and gangs lurking at night, robbing the tuckshop, breaking windows and even stealing lead from the roofs of buildings. It was a change from the busy hustle of Ultimo, but not a particularly good one. Again though, the school applied their humour to these sorry conditions of surroundings and their very limited space. For example, the timetable showed "Tree 1", "Tree 2" and "Tree 3" as locations. The boys continued to work hard, participating in Empire Day activities and proudly representing Tech High. There was one redeeming quality of Albion Street though, and that was that the Sydney Cricket Ground and Moore Park were but minutes away, providing a great deal of convenience for the boys' sports training.

A New Headmaster (1926-27)

In mid-1926, Headmaster Williams abruptly announced his resignation from headmastership. He had accepted a transfer to Fort Street High, "betraying" Tech, most probably for monetary reasons (though we don't know for sure!). He made sure only the staff and prefects knew about this transfer, however, and made an emotional speech about the growth Sydney Tech had undergone through under his leadership, and how he expected much more of the same development and achievement in the years to come.

John Williams and 1926 Prefects (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School)*

And Williams definitely wasn't mistaken that Sydney Tech had produced countless moral, intelligent men ready to tackle vocational training and eventually technical work that would shape the whole of Australia. He had always kept in mind "Manners Makyth Man" sitting on the maroon and sky blue crests of the boys' school caps, and always strived to improve the quality of teachers' life, physical conditions and most importantly the one-in-a-kind technical education that the school provided.

It was time to move on, however, and continue from the great legacy Williams had left. This job was left to the new Headmaster, Frank McMullen. McMullen had previously worked as principal at Hurlstone Agricultural High and some other schools. He set out to deal with improving sports at Tech and also the constant issue of the physical conditions of the school site and buildings, even including sporting grounds and the tuckshop now. He was headmaster of Sydney Tech for 7 years.

Goodbye Albion St (1928-56)

In 1928, the government bought a piece of land in Bexley that was going to turn out to be quite significant for Sydney Technical High School… but meanwhile, boys at Tech continued to turn out impressing results in the Leaving Certificate (somewhat like the HSC today) and great achievements in sports and extracurricular activities over the years in spite of the physical problems of the school. Inspector Phil Price, a former teacher at Tech and a representative of the Department of Education, said in his 1943 report of the school: *"It is a tribute to the Headmaster and staff that such fine work is being done under such disadvantageous conditions."*

Sydney Tech was once again "betrayed" in 1933 with the transferral of Frank McMullen to Fort Street High and a new principal coming in, Mr. MacKinnon. Different plans were being toyed around with to deal with the ever-present building issues over the years. For example in 1942, an idea to move Tech to the Fort Street Girls High premises was circulating, but quickly died down, and a few years later there was apparently going to be a new school built at Randwick but nothing ever happened. Meanwhile, the piece of land in Bexley owned by the government (which was previously McConnachie's Paddock) was being fought over by a multitude of individuals and organisations such as a church, the Bexley local council and the MWS&D board. In September 1947, the Director of Technical Education asked whether a technical college could be built at Forest Road, but the Department of Education replied: *"… the site cannot be made available for Technical Education."*

McConnachie family in front of their home (National Library of Australia)

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But it was from 1948 and the headmastership of William Pilans that the most interesting events for the school were yielded. During May 1949, after discussion with the P&C Committee and Old Boys' Union, the NSW Education Minister assured that there would be a new Sydney Tech built, and that sketch plans were almost complete. Later that year, Phil Price (mentioned on the previous page), who was an Old Boy and former teacher who worked up the ranks of the Department of Education, finalised the decision of the move of STHS to Forest Road.

In 1950, the P&C reported that plans were nearing completion and that the new school was to have modern state-of-the-art facilities. Eventually in 1955, construction at the site began, and there was a considerable buzz amongst the students anticipating the brand new school. In the end, construction turned out to cost over 250,000 pounds – the highest budget ever for building a state school at the time. One would hope there would be "considerable buzz" amongst students for that expensive of a school!

Building at the new Tech site (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School*)

Finally, at the end of Term 2 in 1956, Sydney Technical High School was closed at Albion St, leaving behind a falling apart location, albeit full of nostalgia for the boys. At the beginning of next term, everyone moved in to their brand new Sydney Technical High School with modern equipment, large play areas, brilliant facilities and a myriad of other changes that brought smiles to the students' faces.

Quadrangle (sths.nsw.edu.au)

The almost 50 years of Sydney Tech at Forest Road, Bexley were some of the most stable and successful years of the school.

Changes Galore (1956-60)

The beginning of a new era of Tech at Forest Road brought about countless changes to the school's culture, aims and of course, physical conditions. Firstly, now that the school was no longer in the city area of Sydney and now further down south, Tech began attracting more local boys instead of a variety of students from all over Sydney. It wasn't necessarily a bad thing though, as no longer was Tech a school primarily focused on Technical Education! Upon the moving to Bexley, all ties with the Technical College had to be severed, and although Sydney Tech of course still offered technical subjects in its curriculum, it was no longer the most important part of the school's program. However, it was fortunate that the name "Sydney Technical High School" remained intact, even though it could have been renamed "St. George Boys High School" or the like, as the name was and still is a very important part of Sydney Tech's history.

1957 was the first full year of the revitalised Sydney Tech. By the end of that year, less than 12 of the teachers who had taught in early 1956 remained, largely due to the location moving. There was a new headmaster and deputy headmaster too. Some work still needed to be done at the site, for example, the finishing touches to the gym and auditorium and the evening out of the hilly land at Tech, but a majority of students and teachers alike definitely appreciated the new Sydney Tech.

Year 11 at Bexley (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School*)

Golden Jubilee (1961)

In 1961, Sydney Tech celebrated its 50th anniversary. From humble beginnings at Ultimo (1911-25) to cramped conditions at Albion St (1925-1956) to a fully-fledged, academically successful school at Bexley producing moral, rounded students, Sydney Tech had come a very long way since its inception. The school had gone through five headmasters Williams, McMullen, MacKinnon, Pilans and Lake and the headmaster at the time was Harry Brown.

Governor and his wife looking at art show, guided by headmaster Brown (*The Story and Times of Sydney Technical High School)*

The highlight of the year was October, when the Jubilee Celebrations occurred. A concert, dinner and other celebrations were held to commemorate 50 years of achievement at Sydney Tech.

Everything In Between (1962-2010)

Back in August 1958, the school's facilities were officially opened – the administration block, auditorium, gymnasium, general classrooms and manual training building. However, a number of changes were still to occur in regards to the buildings of Sydney Technical High School.

On the 30th April 1966, a swimming 6-lane 25m swimming pool with diving blocks was opened, addressing a decline in the annual swimming carnival results. It was a remarkable achievement that $34000 had been raised by the Pool Fundraising Committee to initiate the construction of the pool, without any help from the Department of Education. However, the pool was removed after several years because it had fallen into disrepair due to maintenance and financial issues.

In 1967, the Library Science Block was opened, with the Kingston-Smith library and new science laboratories being introduced to the school. In 1985, a peculiar incident occurred in the annual school journal, where writers accidentally wrote to celebrate the school's 75th anniversary a year early!

Tech's administration block (en.wikipedia.org)

A brand new administration block was erected in 1988, and this new building stands till today, welcoming students, staff and visitors to the school. In 2006, Sydney Tech celebrated 50 years of "residence" at their Bexley site. In that year, the archives were updated and history commemorated – but there was an even bigger event coming up 5 years later.

100 Years of Tech (2011)

In 2011, Sydney Tech held its biggest celebrations yet to pay tribute to 100 years of existence! Countless activities were held to celebrate, such as open days, the unveiling of a centenary plaque, the construction of a Centenary Garden, the sale of various historical memorabilia and many more.

For its fascinating 100 years of successes and failures and ups and downs, Sydney Technical High School truly had plenty of reason to celebrate.

The unveiling of the centenary plaque, with principal J. Lyons on the far left (sths.nsw.edu.au)

Continuing the Pursuit of Excellence (2012-2013)

Up until this very day, Sydney Tech has been continuing to pursue their path of excellence and certainly isn't failing to produce well-rounded, intelligent members of society. There is no doubt that the school will continue these traditions of performance for a very long time indeed.

PRESENT

Now that we've gone and looked at the (extremely detailed) timeline of Sydney Tech, what about the school today?

GENERAL

Sydney Technical High School is a fully academically selective public high school for boys studying Year 7-12. It is located on 686 Forest Road in Bexley, a large suburb of the City of Rockdale. Over 900 students currently attend Sydney Tech. The current principal is Jacqueline Lyons.

Photo from Google Maps Street View

Like all other selective schools in New South Wales, enrolment at Sydney Tech in Year 7 is subject to exceptional performance in the Year 6 Selective Schools Test, a state-wide examination Year 6 students can choose to participate in to gain entry to selective schools. In Years 8 to 11, some students are accepted to the school on the basis of testing and interviews.

Sydney Tech is the brother school of St. George Girls High School, and these two schools participate in many activities together. St. George Girls High is also a selective school and is located in Kogarah (and obviously, it's for girls).

The school colours of Sydney Tech are `sky blue` and `maroon`. The school motto is "Manners Makyth Man", and the school song, sung to the tune of "Men of Harlech", is as follows. You can see the reference to the poor conditions of Albion St in the second line.

See the Tech High School assembling,
Floors and stairways all a-trembling.
Happy smiles, faint hearts dissembling
As we tramp to school.
Trig, and mensuration,
Atomic calculation,
Homework none,
Or left undone.
And "Manners Makyth Man" upon our hatbands-
All regard it as our motto,
Some forget it, too, in toto,
Till they're cautioned, voce sotto:
"Don't disgrace your School".

See us when we face the Leaving,
There's no time to spend in grieving;
All are bent upon retrieving
Time we lost last year.
Chemistry and History-
All to us a mystery;

Still we plod
Until we nod
And face the awful paper bright and cheerful.
Some go down, and some go through it;
Some there are who live to rue it.
Masters smile and say. "We knew it.
Now you know it, too".

See us when we're through the Uni,
Some are wise and some are looney,
Many strong and many puny
After years of work.
Some have gone a-mining,
Sugar some refining:
All essay
To earn their pay.
Some are building bridges o'er the Harbour,
Hydro-works for irrigation.
Dams enough to drown a nation,
Every fellow to his station,
In this world's great work.

Year 12 Sydney Tech students consistently achieve exceptional results in the Higher School Certificate, with a majority obtaining ATARs above 90. In 2012, the school achieved a rank of 33 in all the schools of NSW. Shown below is the school emblem of Sydney Tech.

There are six houses in Sydney Tech: Turner, Williams, McMullen and MacKinnon, Broome and Grotto. The first was the Superintendent of Technical Education who initiated the foundation of Sydney Tech, and the other five were notable headmasters/principals of Sydney Tech.

Sydney Tech boasts a spacious, modern auditorium with excellent equipment seating 1000. It has high quality sound and light facilities and is suitable for dramatic and musical performances. The auditorium is also where school assemblies are held.

Outside and inside the auditorium (Photos from en.wikipedia.org and sths.nsw.edu.au)

The Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith Library is named after the most notable Old Boy of Tech. It was opened on the 7th October, 1977, and has over 18000 fiction and nonfiction books and a range of periodicals, videos and CD-ROMS. The Bob Booth Room in the library contains archives of the school history such as photographs and the annual journals.

sths.nsw.edu.au

Apart from regular classrooms, the school also has audio-visual facilities, a drama room, woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing rooms, music rooms, rooms with computers, visual arts rooms, various science laboratories, a canteen, the Elmo Landsberger Memorial Cricket Nets, a gymnasium with basketball courts, an outside volleyball court, handball courts and outdoor basketball courts. That's a lot of rooms and sporting facilities!

Computer room, music room, science laboratory and basketball court (sths.nsw.edu.au)

Sydney Technical High School has a standard high school curriculum with the additional of a variety of technical subjects. In the pre-HSC years, students study English, Maths, Science, Personal Development/Health/Physical Education, History or Geography and can also choose from a variety of electives including Industrial Technology (Timber, Metal, Electronics or Engineering), Drama, Music, Visual Arts, Information and Software Technology, Graphics Technology, Commerce, French, German and so on. For boys studying at Sydney Tech, there are plenty of different interests they can choose to pursue and that's one of the reasons many people are enticed to the school.

Class time in Industrial Technology, Science and Visual Arts (sths.nsw.edu.au)

In Years 11 and 12, there are several fields with subjects students can participate in for the Higher School Certificate: English, Mathematics, Technology and Applied Studies (TAS), Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE), Science, Creative Arts and PD/H/PE. All boys are required to complete an English course and many choose to study a TAS subject such as Design and Technology, Engineering Studies, Information Processes and Technology or Software Design and Development.

The curriculum at Sydney Tech has without doubt had a significant impact on the career paths and futures of the boys who studied there. Of 65 reunited Old Boys who were in Year 12 in 1956, the first year at the Forest Road site, there were 22 engineers and 9 scientists. The quality of teaching must also have had its mark on students, with 15 of the people who attended the reunion having pursued educational careers.

An enriching atmosphere is developed at STHS through a myriad of extracurricular activities before and after school and during recess and lunch. Firstly, Sydney Tech has quite the reputation in sport. It is one of the 19 schools in the St. George Secondary Schools Sport Association and competes with other schools in cricket, basketball, soccer, tennis, softball and many more. Students can also participate in non-grade sports like fencing and sailing, and can also play the common sports such as basketball non-competitively. Every year, three sports carnivals are held at Tech – swimming, cross country and athletics. Many boys advance to zone, regional and state carnivals after good results in the school carnivals.

(sths.nsw.edu.au)

(sths.nsw.edu.au)

Music is also a very important part of the Tech High culture. There are many bands and ensembles of different levels at the school, many of which perform at special community events. These bands are separate from the examinable music program part of the school curriculum.

Sydney Tech also aims to develop leadership skills in their students. The Student Representative Council represents the students in meetings and are assigned responsibilities of organisation for many events that occur as part of the student life at Tech, such as the school dance. There is also a Peer Support program dedicated to easing Year 7 boys into the school's culture and increasing the leadership and interpersonal skills of the Year 11 peer support leaders.

In addition to these activities, Sydney Tech encourages participation in the Chess Club, creative arts competitions, Duke of Edinburgh program, debating competitions, science and mathematics Olympiads, Model United Nations, the Interact fundraising group and many more clubs and competitions.

(sths.nsw.edu.au)

PRINCIPALS AND HEADMASTERS

These are the first two headmasters and the current principal.

John Williams (1911-26)

John A. Williams was the very first headmaster of Sydney Technical High School. He entered the Education Department in 1885 as a pupil teacher at Grafton Public School. After a series of promotions, he was given position of Deputy Headmaster at Sydney Boys High School for his outstanding work as an assistant. In 1911, he was chosen to be the headmaster of Sydney Technical High School in its first years. Throughout his 11 years of headmastership, he showed ability and humanity in guiding the newborn school through its early stages. In 1926, he transferred to Fort Street High School after 15 years of working at Tech.

Photo from STHS Journal 1961

Frank McMullen (1926-33)

STHS Journal 1961

Mr. Frank McMullen was given the honour of succeeding Williams at Sydney Tech after 30 years of service in the Education Department. He was a versatile sports player, highly intellectual and a resilient man during tough times. He was quiet, and showed tact and tolerance when dealing with what were his companions to him – the Techies. He was headmaster of Sydney Tech for 7 years and became Headmaster of Sydney Boys in 1934.

Jacqueline Lyons (2007-present)

Ms. Jacqueline Lyons is the 14th and current principal at Sydney Tech. As with most other principals and headmasters, she has had previous experiences with leading schools. Ms. Lyons was principal during the 2011 centenary of Tech. She continues to work hard to improve the school in every way possible.

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Here is a collection of famous students who studied at Sydney Tech.

Charles Kingsford-Smith (aviator)

This world-famous aviator studied mechanics and electrical engineering at Sydney Technical High School from 1912, at 14 years of age. Remember that at this time, it was not yet a proper high school, but a prevocational technical training institute. Sir Charles Edward-Kingsford Smith was born in 1897 in Brisbane, the youngest of seven children. In 1914 when the First World War broke out, he enlisted in the army. In 1917 though, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and this is when his aviation career began to blossom. Throughout the course of his lifetime, he achieved many records in flying, for example the first trans-Pacific flight from the US to Australia. He disappeared and presumably died in 1935. He is by far the most notable Old Boy of Sydney Tech.

en.wikipedia.org

Bruce McDonald (politician)

Bruce John McDonald studied at Drummoyne Boys' High School and Sydney Technical High School. He was the leader of the Liberal Party of Australia during June 1981 until October, when the party suffered a massive defeat at the federal election and he lost his seat.

Graham Richardson (politician)

Graham Richardson, born in 1949, was a Senator who completed his secondary schooling in Sydney Technical High School. He was a senior minister in the Hawke and Keating governments and is now a political lobbyist and media commentator.

Clive James (writer)

Clive James, who was born Vivian Leopold James in October 1939 at Kogarah, is a prominent Australian author, critic and poet. He studied at Sydney Technical High School and the University of Sydney and is best known for his autobiographical series *Unreliable Memoirs*, in which he includes descriptions of his school life at Sydney Tech. Since the 1960s, he has lived and worked in the UK.

Stephen Wooldridge (cyclist)

Wooldridge was born in 1977 and graduated from Sydney Tech in 1995. He received a scholarship from the Australian Institute of Sport and is now an Olympic and four-time world champion track cyclist.

Imants Tillers (artist)

Tillers studied at Sydney Tech until 1968. He is a visual artist renowned for his work exploring the themes of migration, displacement and landscape. He has been the recipient of multiple awards throughout his career.

Paul Gallen (rugby league player)

Paul Gallen was born in 1981 and is now a professional rugby league footballer playing for the Cronulla Sharks. He made his NRL premiership in 2001.

OTHER NOTABLE PEOPLE

John Turner

John William Turner was one of the most important people involved in the creation of Sydney Technical High School. He was the Superintendent of Technical Education at the time Sydney Technical Day School, and eventually Sydney Technical High School, was established.

Turner was born on 14 May 1849 at Parramatta, the son of a shoemaker. His first step into the realm of education, after his schooling, was becoming a pupil teacher in 1864. His career flourished from then and eventually he became the Superintendent of Technical Education in 1902.

During his years in this role, although Turner realised that the government placed more of a priority on primary and secondary education than on technical schools, he worked hard to implement more and better quality places for technical training. He was a major part of the formation of Sydney Technical Day School in 1908 and his strong advocacy led to it being granted high school status in 1911, and thus founding Sydney Technical High School.

John Turner died of diabetes in 1913, aged 64. His legacy, through the proud achievements of Sydney Tech, lives on till today and his role in the creation of the brilliant school will never be forgotten.

There's no history without a story and the story of Sydney Tech is an incredible one filled with humour, academic success and perseverance through hard times. Sydney Technical High School, its students, staff and community are truly commendable and an exemplary reflection of both the Rockdale spirit and their own motto.

Manners Makyth Man is not simply an appraisal of politeness. It is a statement on how people should never be judged upon the circumstances of their birth or position, but rather how they act towards others, towards problematic situations, towards hardships. And it is this motto that has guided Sydney Tech throughout its years. Principals led the school altruistically, putting in all their effort to solve any issues and create harmonious relationships with the boys. Staff members contributed vastly as well, whether it be guiding the metalworking education of numerous classes in just one day, or overseeing the administration of the school facilities. The parents and carers of Techies also helped to fundraise and advocate for the continuous improvement of Sydney Tech. And last, but certainly not least, all the students who have worked hard to excel in sports and academics, the students who endured appalling physical conditions throughout the years, are the ones who created the Tech culture of determination, sardonic humour and all of the other virtuous qualities you can think of. This positive culture exists in every form, tangible and intangible, to this very day.

These students, encouraged by the environment of Sydney Tech, have developed an insatiable enjoyment of learning, profound skills in the subjects they study, their own individual values, confidence and leadership, empathy and social responsibility, resilience and perseverance through difficulties, and so much more. In this respect, Sydney Technical High School is not just a place to learn how to do woodwork, study Shakespeare or play sports. It is a place where boys are nurtured to become positive, responsible, intelligent and moral members of society. Sydney Tech is not an ordinary school, and there is no doubt that Rockdale is exceedingly proud to have such a school within its community, for the countless reasons of virtue aforementioned and those you are sure to have picked up in your own mind upon reading this history.

You also know from reading this that the school recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011. Through these 100 years, Sydney Technical High School has gone through tough times unscathed, garnered top-notch results in both academic and extracurricular fields and produced many successful alumni… we can only wait and see what fantastic things Sydney Tech will achieve in the next 100 years.

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