In 1901, the TSS grounds were surrounded by Tea Trees, swampy marshes and bushland. Only a bush track led the way in and out of TSS. Goods were transported in by horse and cart or by boat, via the Nerang River.

The boys were left to create their own fun if they were not helping with chores, such as fetching clean water, picking vegetables, collecting and chopping firewood and digging the toilet holes. The early boarder boys were expected to help out a lot around the grounds as Horace Dixon did not have staff to complete these tasks in the early years.

There was no running water, electricity or toilet facilities. Bathing was a cold dip in the river, fresh water was collected in buckets from Pong Creek, which ran through the school under the now Centenary Centre, Sport was a great pastime and the boys eagerly participated in various codes.

The boys helped clear the patch of land beside the original school house to make a crude cricket pitch and rugby area. Tennis nets were in front of the school house on the banks of the river and a fishing jetty was built next to the rowing area, north of the school buildings. In 1910 a rowing shed was added and the rugby ground was moved to the west.

On low tide the boys would be able to walk across the Nerang River to Main Beach for a swim in the surf.

Pong creek was a great place for relaxing on a hot day with picnics held on the banks.

The boys loved to go exploring around the area and searching for wildlife in their leisure time. They would set up small humpy’s and make tree houses to entertain themselves.

Although life was very basic back then, they were a few, a happy few, a band of brothers.