



The School History

By Paul Connolly

In 1989 a few people from the community asked me to set up a private junior school. Up until then, a handful of children were being taught by Lynn Hardwick out at Larry Cumming's Farm, which is why some people still refer to the School as "The Farm School". The very few parents involved, (Jones, Varley, Connolly), would take turns to transport the children out to Larry's farm each day, where Lynn gave them a very solid education in a single room.

With a rapidly increasing population in Victoria Falls, came pressure to build a proper private school close to town. Helen Jones had been successful in acquiring the land, but I was soon to discover that we were to face insurmountable problems. Over a period of 18 months I had many meetings with the Town Council, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Local Housing and the Ministry of Physical Planning, whilst still trying to raise the funds and guarantees required.

I approached Richard Branson, John Bredenkamp, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and many embassies and, although, they were sympathetic, they were not prepared to provide the essential guarantee.

It was now 1991. The area where the school now is, was thick teak forest. There were no buildings at all in the whole area west of the Victoria Falls/Bulawayo Road and it was only several years later that the present VID building went up. Left with no alternative, and with time running out, I took a wild chance and instructed the builders, Glendenning, to proceed. With almost superhuman effort from Lorie Amos, Annie and Debbie Rabinovitch, Helen and Gary Jones, Ray Stocker, Colin Mason and Marie Connolly, and with the generosity and understanding of our predicament by CABS and Glendenning, we were able to raise the funds and see our way into the future.

Initially, the only buildings were the present Grade 1 to 4 block, the administration block and the toilets. So, with no Headmaster and only three teachers, the school opened in September 1991, with a little less than 30 pupils. We had no facilities, so swimming activities were held at the Sprayview Hotel and running was done on a very small field which we had hacked out of the teak forest. Elephant were in the school grounds on a daily basis, buffalo very often and even lion on a few occasions. It is strange to think that those pupils are now well over 25 years of age.