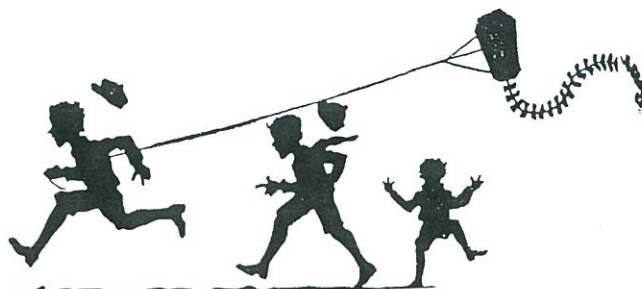


## Tales Out Of School



# TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

A NOSTALGIC INSIGHT INTO EDUCATION

FOR PARENTS

TEACHERS

AND ALL THOSE WHO ATTENDED SCHOOL

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*I'm just an old-fashioned bloke with an old-fashioned yen  
To write about my schooldays of writing tablets, ink and pen.*

*Alex Mc Andrew*

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THE YOUNG DREAM OF THE FUTURE  
THE OLD DREAM OF THE PAST

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the School Files of the Department of Education made available through the Archives Office of the State of New South Wales, to the Ryde District Historical Society, to the Librarian of Ryde City Library, to the local schools, to all those good people who have contributed information and photographs, sincerest thanks.

The tales taken from the archives that follow are about actual incidents that occurred at school, we must remember that those incidents were not everyday, but isolated events. Nevertheless, I think you will find them highly interesting. In the tales we will read about anger, fear, impatience, jealousy, deceit, parochialism, suspicion, dread of disease, weakness, courage, civic pride ... In addition there are memories of ex-pupils which reflect the way it was in their day. Readers will certainly be able to compare the size of their particular classes at school compared with those of eighty and ninety in some parts of the nineteenth century. They can likewise compare the teaching aids they enjoyed, the bare chalk and talk of early days and of unenthusiastic teachers of any era with those available to-day.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The name Ryde in Sydney is named after Ryde in Britain, a seaside resort on the Isle of Wight facing Portsmouth, but the name is not English but Danish, meaning a *clearing in the forest*, from the time when it was inhabited by Danes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION: FROM KNOWLEDGE TO WISDOM

The word education comes from Latin, meaning the bringing up of children. It doesn't say how, but presumably to teach them how to live decently. Education to-day is many things: knowing the world through reading and writing and all manner of modern devices; it is training for citizenship, respect for others, however different they may seem to you, to live in peace — to prepare for a career in life. The motto of Ryde Public School is *Learning for Life*.

*The main aim of education is to provide individuals with the ability to think for themselves, not to go along with the sheep.* — Harry Allen, former highly respected teacher in New South Wales. If only this aim were fulfilled in the majority of cases, we would have a better society.

## FLASHBACK

Many readers would remember, perhaps fondly, *The School Magazine*, which was issued free each month by the Department of Education. The *Magazine* was initially and for decades in the future a treasure house, especially for the average school pupil when books were rare. The only book in many homes then was the Bible. *The School Magazine*, published every school month, contained a variety of interest for classes III to VI: stories, illustrations, songs and poems.

Let's now turn the clock back. Here is the front page of the very first issue to Grades V and VI in 1916:

# THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE

... OF ...

Literature for our Boys and Girls.

PART II — — — FOR CLASSES IV & V.

[Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper.]

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VOL. I—No. 1.

SYDNEY.

FEBRUARY 1, 1916.

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## DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

Here is the new School Magazine, which henceforth will come to you monthly. A Magazine means a storehouse ; it is a word we get from the Arabs. And what are the stores you will find here ?

There will be tales of boys and girls, of men and women, of birds and beasts, of all living things.

You will find tales of the fairies and their wonderful doings.

In fables you will meet with animals that talk in your own language, and say wise things which you will like to know.

There will be stories of all lands and seas, of our own Australia, of the mother country, of the regions of tropical suns, and of ice and snow. You will read what men do there, how they live and work and play, and what adventures they have.

There will be tales not only of all countries, but of all times. You will learn what brave men did and wise men thought thousands of years ago.

Most beautiful of all will be the golden verse, which will delight your ear as well as your mind.

And whence come all these treasures ? The editors write some of the articles specially for you, and search everywhere for what will give you pleasure and perhaps a little wisdom too. What they provide is handed to the Government Printer, whose work is done in a big building which some of you may have seen. He hopes you will like the type and the pictures. The cost is borne by the Government out of money contributed by the people. Thus you see how many are helping to give you this Magazine. You will sometimes think of them and be thankful.

Just in case you missed it in the above, the word *magazine* stems from the Arabic language meaning a storehouse. The word for a *store/shop* in French is *magasin*. *The School Magazine* was indeed a veritable storehouse of riches in literature, knowledge and wisdom, a *pot pourri* of world culture with tales of all lands and all times; inspiring stories of heroism, dedication and adventure; myths, fables and morals; Bible stories; famous songs and chosen poems both Australian and English; features on Arbor Day and nature; plus an occasional dash of patriotism and boosting of the British Empire theme.

### THE CLOCK OF LIFE

The clock of life is wound but once, at late or early hour;  
To tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour.  
Now is the time you own: live, love, toil with a will.  
Place no faith in to-morrow, for the clock might then be still.

The clock is a reminder that we spent quite a lot of years being educated and that we must feel grateful for gaining the skills of reading and writing, which we might otherwise take for granted. Most of our past generations attended school when books were much rarer than to-day, when to receive a book on one's birthday was a thrill. There were no public libraries in the suburbs, no computers, no ready information as obtainable from the Inter-net to-day.

The majority of the tales stem from the last few decades of the nineteenth century when education through public schools was in its infancy. Up to 1880 schooling had been tightly in the grips of the various religious denominations, but the Education Act of 1880 created Public Schools, the government withdrawing financial aid from Denominational Schools. Naturally this caused much storm and stress in religious circles, so much so that a joint pastoral letter on education (actually formulated in 1879) stated this stark warning :

*We condemn Public Schools because they contravene the first principles of the Christian Religion; and secondly, because they are seedplots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence and to corrupt the political, social and individual life of future citizens.*

Pretty strong stuff, indeed. It is a wonder that all those who attended such schools ever survived. Nevertheless, the Public School system flourished under the catch-cry that education should be free, secular (that is, not religious) and compulsory. Schooling for all, even for those in remote country areas, became a reality.

Of course, we all remember different things, some of us with relish, some of us with regret. Some of us look back nostalgically at those glorious years; others consider school as the place they were so glad to get out of. There were teachers we liked and others we hated. There were subjects in which we excelled and others in which we performed poorly. Whether we went joyfully or unwillingly to school, we were certainly all extremely sensitive about any injustice on the part of any pupil or teacher. In the society of school we all experienced, perhaps for the first time, the realities of life. We came to know how different people are, in hygiene, in dress, in behaviour, in thinking, in morality, in character, in religion and so on. It was certainly a gradual acquaintance, but, when you come to think about it, it must have been a rather bewildering exposure to the full facts of life. A lot depended on the school we attended, on the pupils and teachers with us and on the attitudes of our parents.

### FIRST FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT

Ryde, about halfway between Sydney Town and Parramatta, actually the third place of settlement in New South Wales, was comparatively slow to gain a Public School. Many country centres had established State schools years well before Ryde opened in 1868. Kempsey, for example opened in 1848 and by 1851 there were already 37 government schools. Until the late 1860s Ryde was known as Kissing Point.

### WHEN RELIGION WAS A BIG ISSUE

Initially, education for children was undertaken by the Church, not by the State. The earliest schools in the Ryde area were denominational, that is, conducted by religious denominations such as the Church of England, the Roman Catholic and the Baptist Churches. Up to 1860 schooling in Australia remained tightly in the grips of the various religious denominations, but with the Education Act of 1866 the Government took control of two educational systems, one Denominational and the other State. Then, in 1880 Sir Henry Parkes, longtime champion of education for all, rich or poor, pushed forward an Education Act which cut off government aid to Denominational Schools. This naturally caused much storm and stress in religious circles, so much so that a joint pastoral letter on education (actually formulated in 1879 through Roman Catholic Archbishop William Bede Vaughan) stated this stark warning: *We condemn Public Schools because they contravene the first principles of the Christian Religion; and secondly, because they are seed plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence and to corrupt the political, social and individual life of future citizens.* During the debate which ensued for years David Buchanan, M.L.A., maintained that if the Roman Catholics were given a share of the education vote that they claimed, the Chinese, for example, would also demand a share. He further put forward the inflammatory argument: *The God in the Chinese joss-house is made of wood; the God worshipped in the Roman Catholic joss-house is made of flour and water. Which is the more barbarous of the two?* Subsequently the Public School system flourished under the catch-cry that education should be free, secular (that is, not religious) and compulsory. Schooling for all, even for those in remote country areas, became a reality.

**CURIOSITY: THE LETTER AITCH** — In the English alphabet the eight letter, H, is pronounced *aitch*. Some people, however, do pronounce the letter as *haitch*. This is generally a hangover from education by Irish priests in the 19th century. It is ironic that the man we consider to be the Father of Education in New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, was said to drop more aitches than confetti at a wedding. Humorists of the day dubbed him *aitchless* 'enry. To quote from a parliamentary session when Sir Henry was berating W. W. Willis, The Member for Bourke: *The 'onourable Member is believed to 'ave committed every crime in the calendar — hexcept the one we could 'ave so easily forgiven 'im — suicide.*



A schoolmaster collecting fees from pupils in 1874. Teachers in Denominational schools mostly depended on fees collected and therefore welcomed high enrolments and regular attendance. Fees at this time ranged between 6d and 1/- per pupil per week with reductions for families. The fee was fixed by the Local School Board which had the power to recommend exemption of fees for children whose fathers were unemployed. On the other hand, those who did not pay could be sued, as was the case in December 1868 when teacher J. C. Browne at the Hunters Hill Parochial school recommended that debtors Messrs Morgan and Hare, who were considered to be well able to pay, be taken to Court.

The first public school in the Ryde municipality was that of Ryde which operated from July 1868. The push for a Public School began in April 1862 when a public meeting of parents and citizens was held in Tucker's Inn. The National School system had been introduced to the State in 1848 and William Wilkins, Inspector of National Schools who had devised the system, attended the gathering. A School Committee was duly formed and with 458 children in the area it seemed that a National School was essential. In those days people had to struggle to gain for their community things which to-day we take for granted. The wheel of progress turned slowly. It was not until 1867 that the strongest petition for a Public school for Ryde was made, a petition which included a sweetener, namely, a local contribution of £100 guaranteed by J. S. Farnell, E. Drinkwater, G. Wicks, W. Small and J. Devlin, of which names four are commemorated in street names in the Municipality. An inspector investigated the claim for a school and noted the following: *Several of those who support the school are in easy circumstances, but the majority belong to the labouring and more independent class.* The school was approved.

**AGNOSTIC:** A Greek word for *One who does not know* [whether there is a God or not].

On July 6 1868 classes began in a building on the corner of present Tucker Street and Blaxland Road (then Parkes Street, the present Parkes Street from Belmore Street being earlier called Rabbit Street). To-day the site is occupied by offices.



Formerly Stanley's Inn, this dilapidated stone edifice with shingle roof, decidedly the worst-looking building in town, was very dark in winter and quite unsuitable for schooling. Nevertheless, the Council of Education, always strapped for funds, paid £280 for the site of ten acres and proceeded to convert the building to provide three classrooms. Initially 69 pupils, of whom some came from Gladesville, were enrolled. Bill Spies (born Gladesville 1931) recalls from his family history: *Because there was no school in Gladesville my grandmother, Charlotte Small (1862-1944), had to ride a pony up to Ryde.*

The earliest school in the district was the Hunters Hill Parochial School which operated from 1838 to 1873. It was not in present-day Hunters Hill but in Victoria Road Ryde. This school was so named because it was in the Parish of Hunters Hill long before the name of Ryde was adopted for the area. It was conducted under the auspices of St Anne's Church of England. In 1858 it was described as a brick building with shingled roof, well ventilated and neatly whitewashed. Desks were fixed to the wall along two sides of the schoolroom. There was a master's residence consisting of two rooms attached at the rear, an excellent garden and the situation was described as very healthy and pleasant. The school population fluctuated considerably. In 1858 there were 102 enrolled (including 16 Wesleyans and 16 Roman Catholics). In 1861 the number had dropped to 44.

The next school, also a denominational institution, was St Ann's [later St Anne's] which operated from 1874 to 1879, but eventually the paucity of pupils saw the demise of the school. It was closed by the Council of Education on July 31 1879. Whereas the Church of England School had closed, the Catholic School, St Charles, survived and has thrived to the present day. In February 1867 when St Charles denominational school applied for certification, it was said to have been operative for eight years, hence since 1859.

In 1867 there were only 17 pupils on the roll (under the required minimum of 25), but the Council of Education tolerated the school's continued existence. By 1868 the enrolment was up to 35. Surprisingly 16 of the pupils were Protestants, who no doubt lived in the vicinity. In 1878 some 92 pupils were enrolled.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The flower daisy gets its name from the original *day's eye*.

A chameleon's tongue, so deft at catching insects,  
is twice the length of its body.

Dogs sweat through the pads of their feet.

Asia represents three quarters of the world's population.

From the age of thirty humans gradually begin to shrink in height — gravity.

There are more than 40 000 characters in Chinese script.

Before the invention of anaesthesia, surgeons in the war zone asked wounded soldiers to bite on a bullet to divert attention from the pain as they operated on the wound. From this came the phrase to bite the bullet, meaning to get a highly unpleasant job done.

#### **HUNTERS HILL PAROCHIAL SCHOOL (DENOMINATIONAL)**

From 1838 to 1879

Main Source: State Archives Council of Education Letters

This school was so named, because it was in the Parish of Hunters Hill long before the name of Ryde was adopted for the area. It was conducted under the auspices of St Anne's Church of England. In 1858 it was described as a brick building with shingled roof, well ventilated and neatly whitewashed. Desks were fixed to the wall along two sides of the schoolroom. There was a master's residence consisting of two rooms attached at the rear, an excellent garden, and the situation was described as very healthy and pleasant. The school population fluctuated considerably. In 1858 there were 102 enrolled (including 16 Wesleyans and 16 Roman Catholics). In 1861 the number had dropped to 44.

**QUICK QUIZ:** "What was the largest island in the world before Australia was discovered?" "Australia, of course!"

Up to 1866 education had been under two systems, National and Denominational Schools. In 1867 George Turner asked for the school to be certificated and therefore qualify for state aid. At this time 73 boys and 53 girls were enrolled with an attendance between 50 and 60. Inspection reported a room of good size, suitable desks, forms and plenty of apparatus, a large playground and proper out offices.



The above photo shows two Church of England schools sited on the northern side of Glebe Street (the present Victoria Road) between Belmore and Devlin Streets. That on the left was established in 1838 as the Hunters Hill Parochial School (in the district of the Field of Mars), the name deriving from the Parish of Hunters Hill before the emergence of the name Ryde. That on the right was built in 1874 to replace the former and became known as St Anne's Denominational School. The school was closed in 1879 but re-opened in 1890 as St Anne's Ladies Seminary. Thereafter the building served as a Sunday School and Church Hall until 1936. It was demolished in 1954.

The organisation was described as good, discipline and management (under one school master, one Pupil-Teacher and two unpaid monitors) as very fair. The school was duly approved on January 28 1867.

With the establishment of the Ryde Public School in the same year the numbers at St Anne's began to waver and wane. In 1871 there were 71 pupils enrolled at the school. In 1874 a new stone building was erected alongside the Parochial School and was known as St Anne's Denominational School. Eventually, in 1879, National Education, having generally triumphed over Denominational Education, the Church of England closed its doors for good. For decades it had rendered great service to the community.

**INSIGHT INTO WORDS:** The word bible comes to us from the Greek *biblion*, but originally that word was named after the old Phoenician seaside city of Biblos. For some 3000 years up to the eleventh century A.D. the water reed, papyrus (from which our word paper derives) was the most common writing medium throughout the ancient world. It was the Phoenicians who first took papyrus from the Egyptian Nile and cultivated it in artificial lakes in Palestine. They specialized in the production of papyrus for writing on and exported it to Greece from the port of Biblos. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, the Greeks borrowed from the Phoenician alphabet around the time of the first Olympic Games in 776 B.C. From that point they took over the art of book writing, the books being made of papyrus from Biblos. So the word book was named after the place from which it came to Greece. Even to-day some people refer to the Bible as the Holy Book or the simply the Book.

#### **TEACHER CHARGED WITH INDECENT ASSAULT**

In 1859 William Fowles was appointed to the school. At the time it was chronically overcrowded and the attainments of its scholars described as mediocre. In September 1861 William Fowles was charged with indecent assault on one of the female scholars. On September 1861 he was summarily dismissed. The event must have placed great doubt in the minds of the community about the safety of their children at school. In days of strong denominational rivalry, it was a sad stain on the Church of England. *I'll teach you to be naughty*, a time-honoured expression of discipline, is open to interpretation. However noble and virtuous a teacher may be, he/she should never allow him/herself to be in a situation alone with a single pupil. This principle is important not only for the welfare of the pupil, but also for that of the teacher, against whom unjust charges might be laid by vindictive pupils. Source: State Archives / Denominational School Board Misc. Letters Sept 17 1861

#### **JEST A MOMENT IN CHURCH**

One Sunday in winter at the local Church, the minister beheld his faithful congregation rather dubiously. He interrupted his sermon and asked one of the regulars to open up all the windows. *Excuse me, Reverend, came the reponse, but it's bitterly cold outside. Yes, said the minister, that's true, but you must know that it is quite unhealthy to sleep with the windows shut.*

#### **OUSTED ON A TRIVIALITY?**

On March 22 1870 the Local Board of the Church of England contacted the Council of Education asking for the removal of their James Carson Browne, teacher at the Denominational School since 1865. The reason for their concern about the welfare of their scholars were that Mr Browne had been recently summoned to appear before the Magistrates' Court on two charges. One was for using very insulting language to the local Senior Police Constable; the other that he had been drunk in a public place (Face's Ryde Hotel in Wharf Street).

On the first charge the accused was found guilty and fined £1 and 5/6 costs or one month's imprisonment in Parramatta gaol. He elected to pay the fine. In his evidence Senior Constable Samuel stated that the defendant had come out of the hotel and said: *Samuel, come and have a glass of ale with me. No thanks, I said. Then he said: Samuel you and I ought to be good friends. I replied that I was unaware that we were ever bad friends. Then he exclaimed: Samuel, you're a liar. Of course, he was intoxicated at the time.*

The educational authorities acted swiftly and Browne had been ousted from Ryde by the end of the month. He appealed in vain. He claimed victimisation, namely that someone in the town had put in a complaint about the Policeman and that Samuel had wrongly assumed that it was he, that Samuel was just getting his own back by charging him for what might otherwise have been ignored. Browne declared that 20 witnesses were prepared to swear that Samuel was unworthy of belief, but Major Blaxland refused to postpone the case. Browne maintained that John Blaxland would not support him because of Browne's supposed support of Mr William Tunks in a recent election. By contrast, while the Board was adamant about wanting Browne out, the parents of his scholars, 48 in all, signed an earnest petition for the retention of their respected schoolie. The list was headed by Richard Lovell. At the time the school had 71 children on the roll, with an average attendance of 50.

The petitioners praised Browne for his efficient teaching and asserted he was incapable of using insulting words to the policeman, further that it could be proved that he was not intoxicated. They expressed the belief that, should the teacher be taken away from Ryde, he should be re-appointed elsewhere, that is not dismissed from the service. The parents' petition was in vain. Browne, who was known for certain peculiarities, just had to go. Possibly it was his drinking habits which galled the Church authorities. They had been waiting for a suitable opportunity to have him drummed out of the service. When he was taken away, the Church was satisfied. Justice was seen to have been done. But Browne also gained.

The parents' petition, together with his denial of guilt, meant that the authorities did not condemn him. He was appointed to a position in the Training School. He had therefore achieved, albeit with some stain on his character at Ryde, the move he had been requesting. In the belief that the Church school would soon be closed, he, like so many others teaching in denominational schools at the time, was looking for a position in a public school. He had especially realised the growing popularity of the public system, when he earlier complained, that with ever fewer enrolments, he was losing more than £1 a week in school fees. He was replaced by Joseph Coleman ex Kurrajong, who was also destined to make some waves on the parochial pond.

## A TEACHING COUPLE WITH A COUPLE OF PROBLEMS

In March 1871, one year after the Local School Board had recommended the removal of schoolteacher, James Browne, the Board consisting of William Creeing, James Devlin, George Watson and Paul Benson, once again wrote to the authorities about their concern for the Parochial School. They indicated that Mr Coleman was a good teacher, but that his wife, who taught needlework and assisted generally, had, to quote from their letter, *certain peculiarities of manner and a temper which made her unsuitable for the classroom. It is right to state that certain rumours of a very painful nature with regard to his conduct towards some of the children have gained currency and that we have enquired into them and found no proof and we do not believe them, but because of the wife's mental peculiarities, as well as the unhappy rumours, we strongly recommend his removal.* A note in the files stated that police authorities including Ryde Senior Constable Samuel and many witnesses had found the rumours to be false and that there was no stain on the teacher's character. Unfortunately, the mud from malicious hands does stain and is hard to wash out. Such was the case with Mr Coleman who himself was therefore seeking to be transferred away from the district. The Council of Education offered him a post at Bankstown, but, to the surprise of all, Coleman declined the appointment, indicating that he would be financially worse off and therefore, despite everything, asked to be allowed to stay on at Ryde. His wish was granted. It is not recorded how the Board members reacted.

Nearly eight months later, on December 11 1871, the Board pushed once again for the removal of the Coleman on the grounds that Mrs Coleman was quite unfit because of her violent temper and general bearing. An inspector investigated and found that Isabella Coleman was not treated kindly by her husband, that she was a woman weakened by disease of a very painful nature, causing the loss of an eye and other physical maladies which might have produced the results which the Board complained about.

Mrs Coleman later stated in writing that her husband together with the Reverend Creeny (who had promised her support, yet exercised strong prejudice against her), were plotting to deprive her of her home and child. With considerable charity the Inspector suggested a solution, namely, that Mrs Coleman be exempted from her role as Sewing teacher, providing that some volunteer in the community would be willing to take over without payment and that she undertook to conduct herself correctly in the future. The plan seemed to have worked. The Colemans left Ryde in early 1873 to take up a position at Broke Public School.

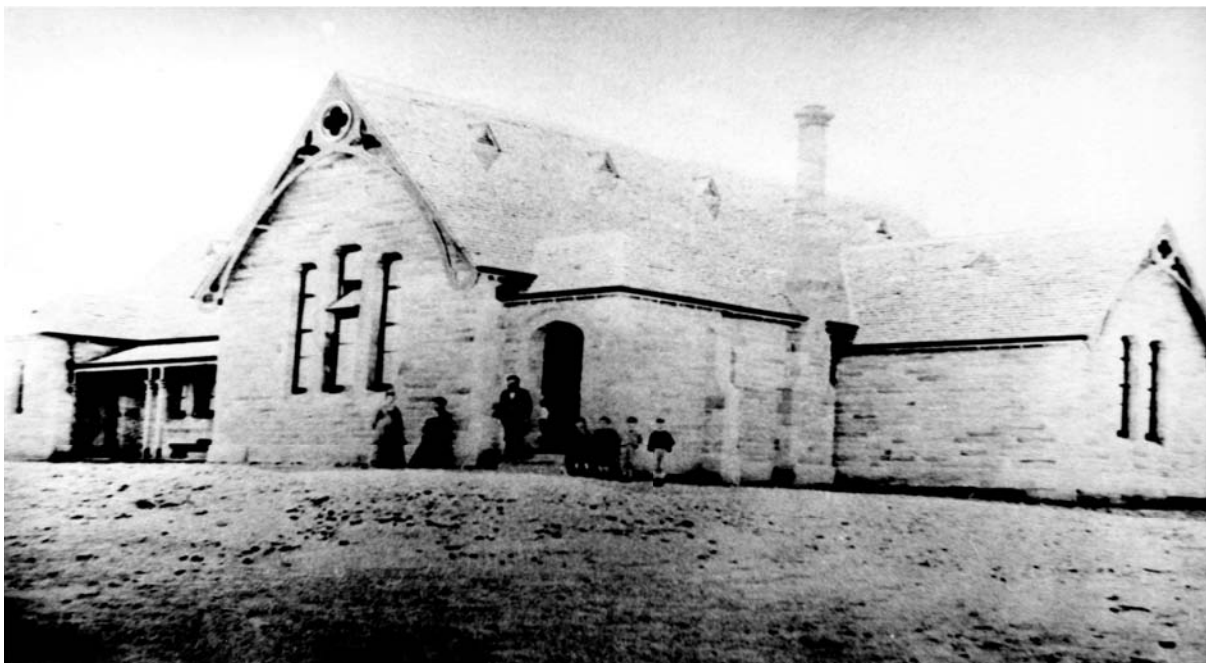
The local parson, a man of few words, visited the local teacher at his home:

*A cup of tea, Sir ?    No tea, thank you.  
A cup of coffee ?    No coffee, thank you.  
A cup of cocoa ?    No cocoa, thank you.  
Some whisky and water ?    No water, thank you.*

**ENLIGHTENING SCRIPTURE EXPLANATION:** “And another of his disciples said unto him”: *Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father: Follow me and let the dead bury the dead.* Now, this was first written in the Aramaic language where the word for dead is *metta* and the word for town is *matta*. There is a slight difference in pronunciation. In many of the mutilated manuscripts the small Aramaic character which determines the difference between the meaning of these two words is likely to be destroyed, especially in the case of carelessness in writing and because of the glassy manuscript used. It is reasonable to assume that Jesus would suggest that the **town** should bury the dead person.

**ST ANN'S [LATER ST ANNE'S] DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL**  
1874-1879

**Main Source:** State Archives School Files 5/1755.3



**POACHING PUPILS PRESENTS PROBLEMS**

In June 1878 an official inquiry was held following a complaint by George Hunt, Headmaster of Ryde Public School, that the teacher at St Anne's Denominational School, Mr W. Bernard, had been indulging in pupil-poaching by endeavouring to induce parents to withdraw their pupils from the State school to his. Feelings must have run high, for when the local Minister of St Anne's, Henry Britten, presented himself at the inquiry, Mr Hunt objected. Mr Britten consented to withdraw. Mr Bernard's predecessor, Robert Campbell, had been transferred out at his request because of the declining income. The question was whether his replacement remedy the finances by encouraging a bigger enrolment. Hunt claimed that Bernard had made the rounds on horseback trying to poach pupils from six families, that, in the process, he had maintained that both he and his wife were better than Hunt and his spouse.

None of the parents said to be involved appeared at the inquiry, but two pupil-teachers at the Public School, H. Small and W. Jurd gave evidence. Mr Bernard not only admitted having solicited Messrs Lovell and Humphries to send their children to the Anglican School, but he had made a house-to-house visitation asking parents whose children were at the State School to transfer to his.

He justified his action in that considered he was simply carrying out Council's policy as conveyed by a circular of November 14 1877, that some of the parents had at one time sent their children to St Anne's School. In the case of Mr Lovell, Bernard maintained that his children were not attending Ryde School at the time of his approach, but Mr Hunt countered with the fact that Mr Lovell had told him his children would not be attending regularly as it was strawberry picking season and needed the boys for labour. It was alleged that Mr Bernard had distinctly told Mr Wearne that he would not buy bread from him if he chose not to support his school, that Mr Wearne promptly decided to send two of his children to St Anne's in order to retain his custom.

Bernard had been in State schools before his present appointment, so that the motives for his actions seemed more economic a than religious. Indeed, Bernard stated openly that he had a large family to support and needed patronage. He also admitted the possibility of his having made comparisons between himself and Mr Hunt and between the respective wives. The inquiry found that this was unseemly and indefensible. Overall Bernard was soundly reprimanded officially and warned re his future conduct.

The poaching affair was to bring a further problem. No doubt quite sore about his loss of status, Bernard acted hostilely against the person who should have been his staunchest ally, namely, the Minister at St Anne's. Indeed, on February 29 1879 the Reverend Henry Britten complained bitterly to the Council of Education about Mr Bernard. *While visiting the school for the purpose of giving religious instruction I became subject to very insulting conduct from the teacher and his wife — in front of the children* [a cardinal sin indeed].

It seems that Bernard's ploy was now to reduce the attendance below the required minimum and thereby get himself transferred. To be sure he was a real operator! He not only urged certain parents to remove their children to the State school, he even had the temerity to suggest that Britten should do the same.

Britten stated he was prepared to let the matter drop, if only Bernard was removed. He was so desperate that he indicated to the authorities that the Local Board was prepared to close the school permanently. Bernard was removed later that year to Richmond. His scheming had won through, but the Local School Board were glad to be rid of him. Bernard was replaced by a new teacher, Richard Chapman, but the paucity of pupils meant the demise of the school. It was closed by the Council of Education on July 31 1879.

Teacher: Doctor, my mind is as good as ever, but I keep seeing into the future:  
Doctor: When did that happen? Teacher: Next Tuesday afternoon.

### ST CHARLES DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL

Unfortunately few files on this school have been found. In February 1867 when it applied for certification it was said to have been operative for eight years, hence since 1859. John Sturgeon taught from 1859 to 1862. Mrs Ann Meikle was employed from 1862 to 1868, sometimes assisted by her daughter as a Pupil-Teacher.

In 1867 there were only 17 pupils on the roll (under the required minimum of 25, but the Council of Education tolerated the school's continued existence. By 1868 the enrolment was up to 35. Surprisingly 16 of the pupils were Protestants, who no doubt lived in the vicinity, in Putney, for example, who found it more convenient than trekking to Ryde Public, which was another mile or so away. In 1868 Mrs Ann Meikle resigned in favour of a male teacher requested by parents. The presence of a female teacher apparently did not encourage boys to attend. Joseph Salame was appointed in 1869 but resigned at the end of August that year. Thomas Cuneen followed and remained for more than a decade. In 1878 some 92 pupils were enrolled. Whereas the Church of England School had closed in 1879, the Catholic School survived and has thrived to the present day.

### MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH WORDS

**THE LETTER AITCH:** In the English alphabet the eight letter, H, is pronounced *aitch*. Some people, however, do pronounce the letter as *haitch*. This is generally a hangover from education by Irish priests in the 19th century. **MASS:** The theological meaning derives from the Latin, *ita missus est* meaning *so you are dismissed*. **ELECTRIC:** Comes from the Greek electron meaning amber. **BRAND:** On a horse or a manufactured article comes from the German meaning a *burn*, the maker's name being originally burned onto the animal or article.

**MELON:** From the Greek meaning a ripe apple. **TO HAUL SOMEONE OVER THE COALS** goes back to the barbarous practice of dragging a man through the fire in order to find out his guilt or innocence. **PULLING IN ONE'S HORNS** is likening the act to the behaviour of a snail when in danger.



A good sermon helps people in different ways:  
Some rise from it and feel strengthened; others wake from it and feel refreshed.

## **RYDE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Public School from July 1868 until March 1887  
Superior Public School\* from March 1887 until 1910  
Public School since 1910

### **“LEARNING FOR LIFE”**

\* Ryde became a Superior Public School in the days when opportunity for post-Primary education was rare. The Superior School provided both Primary and Post-Primary education, offering subjects taught in High Schools such as French and Latin. The difference was that pupils proceeding to the Superior School paid lesser fees than at a High School, which was very selective in any case. In addition, local scholars did not need to travel to a High School, but pupils in areas outside Ryde did travel in order to avail themselves of the advantages of a secondary education.

**Main Sources of Information:** State Archives of School Files 5/1749-55 / Individual informants as named within the text.

The push for a Public School began in April 1862 when a public meeting of parents and citizens was held in Tucker's Inn. The National School system had been introduced to the State in 1848 and William Wilkins, Inspector of National Schools who had devised the system, attended the gathering. A School Committee was duly formed and with 458 children in the area it seemed that a National School was essential. In those days people had to struggle to gain for their community things which to-day we take for granted. The wheel of progress turned slowly. It was not until 1867 that the strongest petition for a Public school for Ryde was made, a petition which included a sweetener, namely, a local contribution of £100 guaranteed by J.S. Farnell, E. Drinkwater, G. Wicks, W. Small and J. Devlin, of which names four are commemorated in street names in the Municipality. An inspector investigated the claim for a school and noted the following: Several of those who support the school are in easy circumstances, but the majority belong to the labouring and more independent class. The school was approved.

On July 6 1868 classes began in a building on the corner of present Tucker Street and Blaxland Road (then Parkes Street, the present Parkes Street from Belmore Street being earlier called Rabbit Street). To-day the site is occupied by offices. Formerly Stanley's Inn, this dilapidated stone edifice with shingle roof, decidedly the worst-looking building in town, was very dark in winter and quite unsuitable for schooling. Nevertheless, the Council of Education, always strapped for funds\*, paid £280 for the site of ten acres and proceeded to convert the building to provide three classrooms. Initially 69 pupils were enrolled.

A small, damp and unhealthy residence was provided alongside for the school's first Master, Mr Herbert Farr. One other teacher, Miss Mary Anne Thornton aged 19, was appointed to teach the Infants. The school soon became very popular, its numbers doubling in the next quarter. Politician and President of the Council of Education, Henry Parkes, after whom Parkes Street is named, was an ardent advocate of State education and visited the school on September 26 1868 and together with William Wilkins, Secretary of the Council of Education, Mr Inspector Forbes, Mr Tunks M.L.A, the Hon. John Blaxland M.L.A., Mr Isaac Shepherd and Mr Small officially opened the school.

*Two commodious classrooms were crowded with children — no fewer than 155 being present! The upper classes were examined in mental arithmetic, reading and grammar and were complimented by the examiners on the proficiency which they had already attained in these branches of elementary instructions. After the examination Mr Parkes addressed the children, exhorting them affectionately to persevere in their studies, and mentioning for their encouragement the names of several great men who had elevated themselves in the social scale by assiduity in their studies.*

*After this address the children sang with great animation and commendable precision, some part-songs, concluding with the National Anthem. The state of the school certainly reflected the highest credit upon teacher, Mr Farr and Miss Mary Anne Thornton, the mistress of the Infants School. The children having left the room, Mr Parkes addressed the visitors and parents of the children on the subject of education, insisting principally upon the peculiar benefits of the Public School system. Mr Parkes was followed in the same strain by Mr Blaxland, Mr Shepherd, Mr Tunks and Mr Wilkins. — The Sydney Mail September 26, 1868 page five.*

The children thought it was wonderful, as they were given a half holiday. This visit, highlighted by press reports, added considerably to the popularity of the Public School. Indeed, a month later its enrolment had risen to 191. From that time Ryde must have been very proud to have a Public School because on July 28 1871 its third anniversary was celebrated with great enthusiasm. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of July 30 the rooms were decked out with flowers, flags, greenery, orange-tree branches laden with fruit and produce of the district and exhibitions of drawings, needle and craft work were presented. Of particular interest was an image of The Marquis of Lorne by pupil-Teacher Master Short. It was composed of native seeds. Guests were Wilkins, the Secretary of the Council of Education, the District Inspector, the Honorable John Blaxland M.L.C. and members of the school board. 20 children crowded into the room and 70 others waited outside as songs and recitations were presented, speeches made and books distributed

\* In April 1878 the Local Education Board asked for stationery to be supplied. Writing paper being quite expensive, people often used cross-writing or wrote on both sides of the paper. The Council of Education answered simply: *It is not the practice of the Council to supply stationery.*

#### TIMETABLE FOR NATIONAL SCHOOLS FROM THE 1860s

Note that the morning recess was of only five minutes duration, whereas lunch-time lasted one hour in winter and a whole two hours in summer. The shorter lunch hour in winter meant that school closed at 3 p.m. instead of 4. On the other hand, the morning recess of just five minutes would seem to have been an extraordinarily short time for all the children to answer the call of nature, carry out their ablutions and perhaps have a nibble of food. The three Rs, reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, were mostly taught before noon and Scripture lessons were given to the two senior classes every afternoon. The last half hour each afternoon was given over to singing, so that the pupils, however reluctant in the mornings, might return home in good spirits.

#### PERSONALITY CLASH DISRUPTS HARMONY

**Main Source:** State Archives Council of Education Letters 1/883

On November 11 1871 Headmaster Herbert Farr wrote to the Council of Education complaining about the conduct of Miss Mary Chizlett, the Infants teacher. His charges were: *1. A decided disinclination to listen to any of my suggestions, as well as the non-performance of certain duties. 2. The habit of speaking in disparaging terms of myself. 3. Antipathy to this school and strong sympathy with another* [perhaps because of her religious persuasions?]. Farr proceeded with details of one he regarded as a calculating recalcitrant colleague: *She does not sign the time book despite her attention having being brought to this and even asserted she will not sign it again. Rarely does she do her full term of 15 minutes playground duty before school. She repeatedly tells her pupils how much better the children at the Church School behave when returning home than those at the Public School. The cause of her conduct is a mystery to me. I have always treated her with the utmost consideration. The animosity she has conceived for this school and the teachers seems implacable and she alls believes that you [the education authorities] entertain so high an opinion of her that you would believe nothing to her detriment. In short her presence here is distinctly detrimental to the welfare of the school.*

Inspector Forbes duly investigated the complaint by interviewing the two adversaries. Miss Chizlett in a modified form all that Farr had alleged but alluded to Mr Farr's cold and distant manner towards her. Pupil-Teacher Master Short positively confirmed that she spoke to him disparagingly of Mr Farr, but the inspector considered that Farr's sending of formal written memoranda to Miss Chizlett was certainly not the way to maintain a proper understanding between teachers [though such a means of communication is so often resorted to when two parties cannot speak comfortably with one another].

The inspector was able to perceive that Farr's manner could be somewhat haughty and repellent. Actually it was not the first time a woman member of staff found him impossible to work with, as exemplified by a letter of March 2 1870 to Inspector Forbes from Miss Mary Thornton who had charge of the girls: *I am asking for removal from Ryde School in consequence of unpleasantness having arisen between Mr Farr and myself. I think I cannot work in the same school in perfect harmony with Mr Farr, so it is desirable for me to be removed.*

The authorities must have been sympathetic towards Miss Thornton as they complied with her request even to the district of Windsor which she desired. While Miss Thornton had chosen flight, Miss Chizlett had opted for fight, but in the end she knew she could not win. Miss Chizlett admitted her indiscretions to the investigating officer and expressed great sorrow for what had happened and hoped that nothing of the kind would ever come against her again.

There is no doubt that such clashes between two people bring only heartache to them and those around them. The inspector advised each party separately to endeavour to get along in the future. He privately suggested that Miss Chizlett should speak with Farr about the whole matter. She did so, apologising to her superior and offering to bury the hatchet. Farr accepted gracefully, saying he would be glad to forget the past and work together in harmony. He even wrote to the authorities about her contriteness and promise of future co-operation. Officially the Council of Education delivered a sharp reprimand to Miss Chizlett and a caution to conduct herself properly in future.

At the same time it advised the Headmaster to be more friendly and of a more conciliatory demeanour. Apparently the feud ended, the two co-operating for the rest of the time they were together. More than two years later they were each rewarded. Farr took a promotion to Gulgong and Miss Chizlett was elevated to Mistress of the Infants at Ryde.

According to the Bible the first introduction was a palindrome, that is one that reads the same frontwards or backwards: *Madam I'm Adam*

Life for teachers in these days were tough, not only at school where their behaviour had to be beyond reproach, but also outside socially. For example, while the general population was free to carouse and play about, any false move by the teacher would be duly reported, whether it was justified or not. The teacher had to choose his friends carefully and in the case of a friendship with a person of the opposite sex, more carefully than ever. Parents who were told tales out of school by their children, would usually believe them and therefore not hesitate to personally accuse the teacher of malice or complain directly to the educational authority. Teachers with huge numbers in the class with intelligences ranging from top to bottom had to work so hard.

## RULES FOR TEACHERS

1872

- 1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, trim the wicks and clean chimneys.*
- 2. Each morning teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.*
- 3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.*
- 4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they attend church regularly.*
- 5. After ten hours in school, the teacher may spend the rest of the time reading the Bible or any other good book.*
- 6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.*
- 7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will become a burden on society.*
- 8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give honest reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.*
- 9. The teacher who performs his labours faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five pence per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.*

A man's world indeed! Note that the word woman is used but once. The only consolation for all of those poor teachers is that they were given just nine commandments and not the full Biblical ten: Just the same, may their joys have been as vast as the ocean and their sorrows as light as the foam!

## A NEW SITE FOR RYDE SCHOOL

On August 13 1875 John Blaxland wrote to the Council of Education asking for a new and larger school to be built on the same site. Aside from stressing the unsuitability of the present building and the overcrowding, Mr Blaxland wrote: *We think that a rising township like Ryde demands a Model School and we believe that when the proposed bridge across the Parramatta River is constructed [though gazetted in 1871, it became a reality in 1881] a building twice the size of the one now used would soon be crowded.* The request granted, plans were drawn up for a building for 300 pupils to be erected on elevated ground on Pope's Ridge (the site of the present school), the ridge and later Pope Street being named after George Pope, shoemaker, storekeeper, first Postmaster and Council Clerk). This land was originally granted to Richard Hawkes in 1792. A teacher's residence with two attic rooms was included in the plans.

The cost was estimated at no more than £2000. The end costs, paid to builders, Coote & Son, submitting the lowest tender, were £2730. The site was described as *elevated, commanding a most extensive view of the Parramatta River [which seems hard to believe] bounded only by the Blue Mountains and the City of Sydney and surrounding country on one hand and the Village on the other.*

The new premises were occupied on May 29 1877 with Head Teacher, George Hunt, who had been appointed to the School in 1874 and who was to remain there for nigh on a quarter of a century. All 100 pupils attending, save one free scholar, paid fees to attend. The old building was sought to be leased by the Council for a School of Arts, but in October 1878, it was allowed to purchase it outright for £400. It remained Council's headquarters until a new building, designed by Varney Parkes, son of Sir Henry Parkes, was erected in 1903.

### \* IF IT'S LAUGHTER YOU'RE AFTER \*

Geography gem from the classroom in Ryde in 1880: *In the year 1869 the Mediterranean Sea was connected to the Red Sea by the Sewage Canal.*

## CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE TESTED

On January 6 1881 Henry Britten of St Anne's Church of England wrote the following to the Council of Education: *As there are to be some changes in the staff of Pupil-Teachers in the Ryde Public School, I have the honour to suggest that they not in future be all of one religious persuasion. Although the majority of the children are those of the Church of England, only the Assistant Teacher belongs to that faith.* [A subtle statement that most of the staff were not of the writer's faith, but perhaps that they should be.] The Council replied that anyone previously appointed from the district was on the basis of fitness alone with no reference to churchism, that it could not regulate the choice of Pupil-Teachers by religious denomination. Back in 1874 just before George Hunt was appointed, this tell-tale note by an inspector was written on the file dated August 8 1874: *If practicable, it would be well to appoint a teacher who belongs to the Church of England.* The appointee was a Wesleyan.

On September 24 1880 a Night School was established for 17 men, taught by George Hunt, always anxious to supplement his income. Of course, the men who were farmers, shopkeepers and tradesmen, paid for the privilege, but salary paid amounted to more than three times the receipts. The Night School lasted only one year. Overall school fees collected in 1880 amounted to £123. Earlier that year Miss Clara Campbell was appointed as Assistant teacher on an annual salary of £66 plus one third of the fees. So teachers had a good incentive in extracting fees due from parents.

### HEADMASTER HUNT IN HOT WATER

In November 1881 two irate parents, Phillip Allen and Timothy Small, wrote to Inspector Johnson asking for an investigation into ill-treatment by Headmaster George Hunt of Allen's stepson, Fred Woodcock and Small's son, Morris Small. Both of the lads were fifteen years old. Allen stated that his stepson had been caned for betting and had had his head knocked and throat marked by the brutal teacher; that when his mother confronted Mr Hunt, he had at first denied the head injuries but later admitted having inflicted them as an act of self-defence.

The second complainant, Mr Small, alleged that Mr Hunt had caned his son unjustifiably because he was involved in bartering, which was against the rules of the school.

Small explained that a boy named Frazer had actually given Morris Small a boat, but later when Frazer asked for it back, Morris had refused and the teacher, having investigated the dispute, concluded that it boiled down to bartering. Both Timothy Small and Mrs Allen had already been to the school and blown up the teacher. The two incidents are bound together, as we shall see.

Mr Hunt, in giving his official explanation to the authorities, stated that Woodcock and Small had gone into class before school without permission, which was a punishable offence. He stated that Frazer was a constant trouble to his parents for taking things from home and giving them away at school. *I had therefore warned the pupils not to receive any such things. When the fight started up at school about the yacht which Frazer had given Small, the matter became my province. Frazer was in the habit of getting up bets at school. Frazer apparently had wanted to race the boat for a bet of 10 shillings, [actually a half-sovereign a gold coin, a precious item in those days, which no doubt the boy had surreptitiously taken from the family jewel-box].*

The Woodcock family were heavily involved with boats, which may explain the boy's eagerness to bet on a boat race with Frazer. Mr Woodcock owned a clinker built gaff sloop, *the Amy*, which served to transport his fruit and vegetable produce to the markets in Sydney. In the above photo taken in 1888 we find the Woodcock family at the Ermington Wharf by the fruit transport, *the Surprise*.

*I punished Small for entering the classroom without approval and I tried to cane Woodcock for betting. After a one-hander he refused to hold out his hand, became abusive and sprang towards me. I caught him by the collar and forced him to sit down and as he wriggled off the seat and continued to be impertinent, I gave him two slaps over the extremity. I most emphatically deny that I caught him by the throat, knocked his head against the desk and marked him, and I deny ever having acknowledged to Mrs Allen that I did.*

#### **SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD**

*Spare the rod and spoil the child*, the Bible tells us so. The French say if you love your child, you chastise it thoroughly; the Germans claim that the rod makes good children out of bad. School society, like society in general, is never perfect, so the use of the rod in earlier schools commanded respect and good manners. A wise person once advocated that every school child should get an occasional pat on the back — as long as it was applied low enough and hard enough! To-day, with the ban of the cane, corporal punishment has flown out of the window, but so have respect and good manners. Who will say that behaviour in society has not changed for the worse?

There followed a full inquiry at Parramatta conducted by inspector J. Murray. Evidence was heard from complainants, Mrs Allen, Fred Woodcock and Morris Small and also from fellow pupils, Hamilton Frazer, Frederick Britten, Bertha Farrell and Ernest Angrove; from Pupil-Teachers Walter Jurd\* and Master Henry. At the end of the day Mr Murray summed up: The evidence clearly shows that the boys, Woodcock and Small, conspired to give false evidence. Their charges are not supported by witnesses; indeed, they are contradicted by every single one of the witnesses to the occurrence; that Frazer, who is in the habit of betting, is guilty of deception.

Mr Jurd's evidence and even that of Mrs Allen herself demonstrate that Mrs Allen makes statements regardless of their truth. All pupil witnesses said that Woodcock had injured himself by trying to resist the teacher; that the punishment did not exceed four strokes and had been duly recorded in the Punishment Book. Further: *All charges have utterly failed, their being no justification at all for the complaints. In fact, the conduct of the boys must be considered as very bad. The conduct of Mr Small and Mrs Allen in insulting the teacher, especially in front of the children, is highly censurable. They should both apologise to the teacher, and before the boys can be received back at school, they too must apologise to the teacher in front of the school for their past conduct and promise in future to obey the rules of the school.*

\* Walter Jurd, appointed as Pupil-Teacher March 1 1877, had certainly earned the position, having worked there for four months without salary. By 1896 Walter was Headmaster at Wellington Public School. The matter was duly settled. The apologies were made.

At the conclusion of the inquiry Timothy Small shook hands with the teacher, told Mr Hunt that he was quite unaware of his son's involvement in betting, of which he did not approve, that he had been misled by his son and that, if the boy needed the cane in future, to please go ahead. There are lessons to be learned in all this, namely, that we all get emotional if it is our own children who are in trouble, especially, of course if we believe that they are unjustly treated, that children do not always tell the whole truth when they complain about the teacher, that there are always two sides to a question and that fifteen year old boys, perhaps getting too big for their boots, are not always ideal bush-lawyers. It also pays for the reader to remember that adolescence is the age when children stop asking questions, because they know all the answers.

### **SOME NOTES ON THE PUPIL TEACHER SYSTEM**

The pupil-teacher system was introduced by William Wilkins in 1851 to endeavour to overcome the shortage of teachers in the Colony. Candidates had to be at least 13 years of age, had to pass certain examinations and become apprenticed on a fixed salary for four years. Any school which had an average attendance of 50 pupils was entitled to take on a pupil-teacher. As early as 1877, with over 100 pupils on the roll, Ryde was staffed by one teacher (George Hunt) and two pupil-teachers (Herbert Small and William Gordon).

Most of the young men and women or rather teenagers (between the ages of 13 and 16) who entered this system took more than four years to qualify either for further training in a college or for appointment as a full-time teacher in a small bush school. It was a very cheap method of recruiting teachers, for the pupil-teachers were paid but a pittance. They worked the full day in the school and had to follow the strict rules set down.

Though the teacher was glad for the help of a pupil-teacher, it was his or her duty not only to observe and assist the trainee in the classroom but also to give lessons one hour per day to further educate the young aide and to prepare him or her for examination, which, if successfully passed, would allow the candidate to enter the teaching service on a provisional basis.

This meant that the Head Teacher's life was a busy one. When Ryde School started there were just four weeks vacation annually, two at Christmas, one at Easter and one during winter.

To provide some idea of the lessons given here are just two tiny extracts from the notebook of a pupil-teacher in 1894: **ENGLISH HISTORY:** *George IV began to reign in 1714. He was the son of the Electress Sophia and great grandson of James ...* [The details of this exciting stuff, irrelevant to us to-day, go on for about two and a half written pages.] **ARITHMETIC:** *Goods were sold at 12 guineas at a profit of 22 38/41 per cent. What was the prime cost?* Even the scholars were being asked such questions as how many acres in 30 000 000 square inches.

[Hands up all those who could solve these problems without a calculator.] Obviously it was not all beer and skittles either for pupil-teacher or schoolmaster. The pupil-teacher system was phased out from 1905.

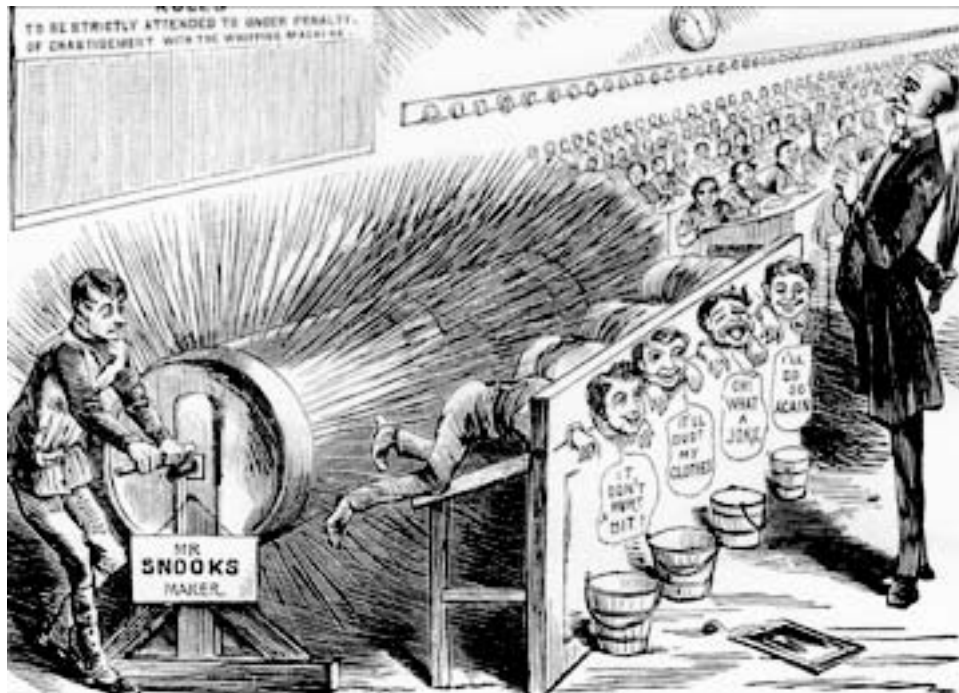
#### WAS CRICKET IMMORAL IN 1882 ?

In November 1882 the Ryde Cricket Club asked the Council of Education permission to use the pitch in the school grounds for their Saturday matches. Mrs Hunt, the wife of the Headmaster, wrote the following plea to the Council: *If you give permission, please stipulate that no horses are brought into the school paddock and not to use the well which Mr Hunt dug at his own expense. Water is a great consideration.* The Council declined the Club's request after the Inspector had stated this: *As Ryde is a country place there should be no difficulty in finding other than the school ground to play upon. In the interest of the Moral Training of the School, I strongly recommend that this application be refused.* The Victorian-age officer who made this decision may have been thinking of the early days of cricket in Australia when matches were played for a wager. Oddly enough, up to 1874 the local Cricket Club had been granted use of the school paddock for practice on yearly renewal.

#### HEADMASTER HUNT BECOMES THE HUNTED ONCE MORE

On March 29 1882 John Manning, a member of the Local School Board, Coroner and Magistrate, wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction asking for an explanation for the caning of his son, Arthur, and two other boys by Headmaster Mr George Hunt, for merely speaking to some little girls when walking home through the village of Ryde. Another parent, Mr Curwood, was equally dissatisfied with the matter. Likewise was the Reverend Britten's son caned, and though the Minister may have upheld the Biblical principle of *Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child*, he agreed that there was far too much unnecessary caning, which was thereby losing its beneficial effect and becoming prejudicial to the interests of the school. Coincidentally, a Henry Britten had been appointed Master at Ryde Public School in 1874 on a salary of £114 per annum. This was after Herbert Farr's departure. On March 21 of that year the Local Education Board had complained to the Council of Education of Britten's being neglectful of duty and that as a result several parents had been taking their children away to send them to Denominational Schools.

The Board claimed that Britten was unable to uphold proper discipline, that from the outset he had failed to exercise proper firmness and decision with older pupils who seemed to be doing as they liked. It was stated that the boys had entered into a conspiracy against the Master. His removal was urgently requested during the Easter holidays. Three days after the Board's letter, with the writing on the wall, Britten himself asked for removal. It was effected almost immediately. This Henry Britten, it seems, was not the Reverend Henry Britten.



The above cartoon lampooning the value of caning in schools was produced as the result of a declaration by a distracted schoolmaster: *A year ago I took charge of a school of 1000 boys. They were a very bad lot indeed and I could do nothing with them. I tried to reason with them, but I might have well reasoned with pigs. I then thought of punishing them, but what mode of punishment should I adopt? In my utmost perplexity I wrote to the principle headmasters in the world. The advice on punishment ranged widely: box their ears; expel them; just take a handful of hair and then give a sharp short twist; overawe them with a look; whip them with a birch rod; rap them on the knuckles with a teacher's pointer; do not allow them out to play; write a letter to their parents; slap their forehead; make them stand up and remain standing; make them hold their hands above their head for one hour; trounce them with a ruler; put their hands in the stocks and beat them with bamboo; cane them on the soles of their feet; lay them across your knee and cane their behind.* The desperate teacher opted for the above whipping machine created by a Mr Snooks.

**IF IT'S LAUGHTER YOU'RE AFTER:**

A ten-year-old boy in class was reading aloud from the Class Reader. He was doing quite well until he struck a foreign-looking word: *The Captain, looking through his spy-glass, sighted on the horizon a b... b....* The teacher prompted: *Barque, boy, barque!* The lad hesitated, looked sheepishly at the class and, obedient to his teacher, responded thus: *Bow-wow-wow.*

**A CHILD'S LOGIC:** In the scripture class the teacher was reading about the Parable of the Prodigal Son and asked this rhetorical question: *Now, who was not glad to hear about the return of the Prodigal son?* This was the quick response came from a young girl: *Please, Sir, the fatted calf.*

Manning further indicated that he first had written to Mr Hunt about the matter, but that the teacher had ignored his communication, which, Manning considered to be an act of gross discourtesy.

It seems that Mr Manning's complaint was written after the School Board had called upon Mr Hunt for an explanation, one which they could not have found satisfactory. The wheel of official investigation duly turned. On June 12 1882, after having received correspondence from Head Office, Headmaster George Hunt submitted the following explanation to Mr John McCredie Esq., District Inspector. *In reply to your communication I most respectfully beg to state that it has been a rule of the School ever since I have had charge, that the boys and girls are not to speak to each other at school, and as much as possible, to keep clear of each other both coming to and going home from the school. On the afternoon of the 17th ultimo Arthur Manning, Fred Curwood and another boy wilfully broke the Rule. They left the school ground in company with several 4th Class girls whose ages vary from 11 to 14. [Note that 4th class of those days does not equate to the same designation of today. It was the senior class in the Primary, some of the pupils being 14 and 15 years old.] I saw them leave the school ground and called after them, but some time after that I saw them chatting in the Village. Next morning I called all the offenders that were present to the front, and after stating the case fully and reminding them how often they had been warned against such proceedings, punished them. — the boys by caning, the girls by keeping them in.*

*The girls had gone out of their way to be in the company of the boys. [One could say that it might have been a time in the lives of the pupils concerned when the boys began to feel gallant and the girls buoyant.] I gave Arthur Manning two moderate slaps, one on each hand. I am positive the slaps did not mark him, and I emphatically state the cane did not cut his hand. The lad did not cry when punished. He was caned at half past 11 and worked well till lunch time, viz. half past 12. If he went home crying, it was certainly put on, no doubt to make an impression on his father, who he knew had interfered with his former teacher. I am sorry that Mr Manning has attempted to interfere with the rules of the school. On one occasion he sent me a letter threatening to report a subordinate teacher on charges that proved to be utterly groundless. I avoid punishing as much as possible for offences committed beyond the school ground. I always advise parents to settle such matters apart from the school. Both Mr Curwood and Mr Manning seem to think I am to some extent responsible for the conduct of the scholars beyond the school ground, when their own children are not concerned, for they have complained to me on different occasions about the scholars. Mr Manning wrote to me complaining of the conduct of Cadet Curwood [Curwood Junior] on the Steamer one Saturday and Mr Curwood sent me the names of boys who had entered his vineyard, and urged me to punish them. He said it was no use going to their parents, as he would get abuse and he did not wish to take them to the Police Court.*

*Mr Manning seems to quite misapprehend his duty as member of the School Board. Instead of protecting the teacher from vexations and frivolous complaints, he not only makes such complaints himself, but encourages them in others. I must say, apart from all this, Mr and Mrs Manning have been exceedingly kind to both Mrs Hunt and myself. Both publicly and privately Mr Manning has praised us most highly and his observations in the visitors book are most eulogistic. I would certainly have answered his letter, only I thought it would involve a great deal of writing, for which I had not time. I told his son Claude to give my compliments to his father and tell him I would see him about the matter named in the letter at an early date.*

*I have the honour to be Sir, Your Most Obedient Servant, Geo. H. Hunt.*

Failure to make an early personal contact with Mr Manning would seem to have been to his great disadvantage. Later Mr Hunt pointed out that, as Mr Manning was normally in the habit of calling in at the school, he felt sure he would have an early opportunity, but the irate parent obviously kept away on purpose. Since Mr Manning was a Magistrate, he should have been able to read between the *lies*.] *I cannot understand why Mr Curwood should complain, for after the recent investigation [by the School Board] he called on me to express his sympathy and to congratulate me on the satisfactory termination of the investigation. I administer as little punishment in the School as I can possibly help. My discipline throughout has been characterised with mildness and firmness, as will be borne out by the Reports of various Inspectors.*

The authorities who generally wanted to placate irate parents, especially those on Local School Boards, proceeded to blame the teacher for being overzealous in the use of the cane, to reprimand him for not replying to Mr Manning's letter and to insist that he apologise personally for such a discourtesy. Feeling he had been unjustly treated, Mr Hunt wrote back to the authorities, insisting that he had done the right thing.

*I am surprised that Mr Manning should have given me trouble on this subject, as he mentioned to me that the objection he had to sending his daughters to a Public School, was the rudeness which the girls acquired through mixing with the boys. I explained that, while they were under supervision at school, that was impossible. He said that might be the case while at school, but going and coming was not so. Since making the complaint Mr Manning has shown his confidence in my discipline by sending two of his daughters. They had never attended school before. I further respectfully state that what I punished the boys for took place on school ground. The girls in question were not "little girls", but at an age when girls require great oversight. Mr Hunt's pleas fell on deaf ears and no further action was taken.*

**DID YOU KNOW THIS?** Scissors were invented by Leonardo da Vinci.  
Captain Cook was the first man to set foot on all continents except Antarctica.  
The average depth of the ocean is four kilometers.  
The name of all the continents end with the same letter as they start with.  
The words *racecar* and *kayak* are the same  
whether they are read left to right or right to left.  
The term *cops* for policemen originated from the copper shields  
and buttons on early police uniforms.  
The Milky Way contains about five million stars larger than our sun.

#### NO RIGHT TO KEEP UNDESIRABLES OUT

On March 8 1886 George Hunt refused to enrol two children belonging to Mr Y. This seemingly drastic action he immediately referred to his superiors: *I admitted the youngest of the children, but refused others until I could communicate with the Minister. Many parents oppose their admission and request me to state their objections. The children are notoriously wicked. Although only about 10 years of Age, one boy has appeared repeatedly before the Ryde bench of magistrates for thieving, and has spent some time in the Ryde Watchhouse. The girl who is a bit older is a very bad girl.*

*The children are under the influence of a mother who is a foul-mouthed wicked woman. She spent some time in Darlinghurst gaol. She is a dreadful character. Any good the children might receive at school would be more than counteracted by her baneful influence. The only way to benefit the children would be to place them in a reformatory and arrange for their father to contribute to their support. I believe their admission will greatly injure the school. Therefore I trust the Minister will give the matter very careful consideration.* The Chief Inspector was of the opinion that, despite the allegations and the possible consequences to the welfare of the school, the children could not be refused admission, but, if after admission they misconduct themselves in a profane or immoral way, they could be removed from the school and the case referred to the Minister. as was usual, the Minister concurred with this opinion.

About five years later on February 24 1891 Headmaster Hunt again had occasion to bar the admission of certain children, namely, those belonging to A Mr X. In his letter to the authorities he explained his motives for so doing:

*Last September Mr X. withdrew his children from this school and sent them to the Sisters School. This morning he sent two of his children back here, also an adopted child. After due consideration and conferring with Miss Lamont and Miss Campbell, who are thoroughly acquainted with the behaviour of these children, I requested them to return home and not attend for a few days for these reasons:*

**CURIOSITY:** Times change. When children of this era looked in a dictionary at the definition of parachute, they found the following: *A sort of umbrella which enables an aeronaut to descend from a balloon.*

*1. Some weeks ago after these children were sent to the Sisters School the same were apprehended for stealing 26/- from the till of the local chemist, for which the eldest girl was sent to reformatory school for 12 months. Since then the little X children have been requested to discontinue attendance at the Sisters School.*

*2. For years I have had trouble with the X. family on account of their thievish properties. Some members of the family would persist in coming late to lessons with the result that other pupils' dinner bags outside were frequently tampered with. One has been guilty of breaking into the Infants Department, forcing the lock on the Press. I caught him in the act. [Mr Hunt sent for the police, but Mrs X. begged him to punish the boy himself and dispense with a charge. Mr Hunt complied with her wish.] Another was fined for stealing ducks. The same lad had stolen a waistcoat from the school grounds during a game of cricket. He afterwards wore the waistcoat to school, when it was claimed by the owner and taken from him.*

*I could give many other instances in which these children have been guilty of thieving, but I shall confine myself to mentioning that shortly before they left the school, one of the girls took the trimmings off a new hat and when charged with the theft, she declared she knew nothing of the matter. A few minutes after Miss Campbell found the trimmings in the bosom of the girl's dress. [Senior Policeman Banks spoke with the girl about the hat incident and soon after she left the school.] The children are very untruthful.*

*They frequently absent themselves from school [a blessing for all!]. They are very badly behaved. Their parents seem to have little or no control over them.*

*3. Mr X. has been most troublesome and abusive. I've always had trouble getting school fees from him. Unfortunately his farm adjoins the school playground. If a ball goes over our fence, he won't allow pupils to get it and forbid any of his workers or family to throw it back. More than once he has been before the Local Bench of Magistrates for drunken behaviour and obscene language.*

*4. Knowing how morally bad both parents and children are, and being aware of the demoralising effect these children would exert over other pupils, I deemed it advisable to keep them out of school pending advice from the Minister. I am acting in the best interests of the school. Should the Minister decide to have the children admitted, I shall esteem it a kindness if a letter be sent to Mr X. that the admission of their children depended on his assurance of their future good conduct.*

The Minister agreed to the teacher's request and the children were admitted. Later on December 3 1893 teacher Infants Teacher Ada Smith had grounds to have Emma X. suspended for having stolen a shilling from a purse in the schoolroom. The girl was readmitted on a promise having being made by the father that he would use every effort to prevent similar misconduct on his daughter's part in future.

It was very easy for the Minister and his officials to sit in judgment on such cases. After all they did not have to put up with the miscreants. Most of the inspectors would have been teachers at one time and perhaps taken refuge from the classroom. They were generally hard on teachers, finding fault with any of their lapses or human shortcomings, as though they themselves had none. Progress in the service depended on satisfactory performance during official inspection. The teachers dreaded this time and passed their fear on to the children, telling them that it was they who were being inspected. All sorts of schemes were devised to prepare for success. Some children might have been asked to stay at home; others with terrible singing voices promised a reward if they would just open their mouth and not produce any sound during singing; there was also the ruse for pupils who knew the answer to raise their right hand, whereas those who didn't know to raise their left hand. Inspectors have been known to criticise teachers for poor control when a pupil has broken wind in class! It is the easiest thing in the world for an Inspector to take over a class for five minutes and win attention. It is a different thing to be with the children all day and every day, difficult because they formed an inevitable blend of good and bad, bright, medium and dull, from different backgrounds and parents. All in all, teaching a class of children is a very complex unit requiring patience, understanding, discipline and skill. It is not for the faint-hearted!

#### **HOW SCHOOL LANES DEVELOPED INTO STREETS**

Access to Ryde school today is by Pope Street or Tucker Street. When the school was built up on what was known as Pope's Ridge, there were no such streets. Entry for those coming from the west was via a lane called Glebe Street, (now Pope Street), because half the block between present Pope Street and Blaxland Road belonged to the Anglican Church and church land used for income from crops or rental was called Glebe land. This thoroughfare was originally a right of way purchased from owner Samuel Small for the sum of £45. Pupils approaching from the south came along a lane which was actually part of the nine plus acres of the school ground. It took a lot of foot traffic as well as unauthorised horses and carts. In the hollow ran a creek (now drained) which was somewhat of a nuisance in rainy weather. In the 1880s Headmaster Hunt had always repaired the track himself, until it became too much for him.

In May 1887 a Mr Thomas Bogus was sanctioned to cover the school lane with three inches of filling. It took seven days at 6/6 (65 cents) per day to spread the 8 loads of gravel at 2/6 (25 cents) per load. The contractor signed the receipt with his mark X. In October 1887 George Hunt requested a crossing for the creek running across the lane. As the condition of the lane deteriorated and parents complained to Council, the latter declined on the grounds that the Lane was on School property, but suggested that it could be handed over to Council. This did not happen. In September 1899 A. H. Tuckwell was authorised to spread ashes over the area (at 2/- per load) and a gate was installed to prevent use by vehicular traffic.



The School on the Hill showing the school pupils on the school lane. The lane was actually part of the school grounds, but came to be freely used by all and sundry, so that eventually it was sold to the Council and became Tucker Street. — Courtesy of Ryde City Library.

In July 1903 the Council successfully bid for 150 ft of the school land from Parkes Street (now Blaxland Road) to allow side access to the new Town Hall to be built. The width was several times wider than the narrow school lane.

Eventually, in 1931, after several attempts to acquire the land over a period of three decades, the Council took over enough area to make a street suitable for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

It was sold to the Council on condition that it was not used for a school or any other purpose which might be considered to be injurious to the welfare of the Public School. It was called Tucker Street, because the land adjacent to the school was owned by Mrs Tucker. The Council then became responsible for the maintenance of the area. Even when Tucker Street became a proper street, the old name died hard, for according to Horrie Davis (born 1928) who attended Ryde School from 1934 to 1940, Tucker Street in his time at school was still referred to as the School Lane. It was then an unsealed thoroughfare.

**KEEP RYDE CLEAN AND TIDY:  
A LITTER REMINDER TO ALL PUPILS**

## TRAMWAY PLANNED ACROSS SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

In May 1888 a survey had been made for the tramway track to Ryde. As one went across the school land and along present Pope Street to terminate at Hattons Flat (the present bus terminal) and another across the southern end of the school grounds where the present Infants School stands, Headmaster Hunt, fearful of this ruining a splendid playground, wrote in to the authorities, suggesting the route be by the southern end of the school grounds along Parkes Street. His suggestion was accepted and when, much later in 1910, the tramway was eventually extended from Gladesville to Ryde. There was a single track which came along Parkes Street, now Blaxland Road.

During an Inspection in 1887 the staff consisted of Mr Hunt, Clara Campbell and Pupil-Teachers, Jane Gascoigne and Leslie Wicks, while Mrs Hunt was in charge of Singing, Drawing and Sewing. In September 1887, following a recommendation from the Inspector, the Primary School expanded into secondary studies including Trigonometry, Latin and French, the school's name being changed to Ryde Superior School. The senior years were known as 5th and 6th classes. The Head's wife, Mrs Hunt, who was a qualified teacher of French with years of experience applied to be French Mistress, but her bid was denied, no doubt because she was the wife of the Head. The Superior School title persisted until 1910 when the institution reverted to a Primary School.

George Hunt must have been a proud Australian. Perhaps he was a Republican, because on May 20 1889, after a new Minister of Public Instruction was announced, he hastened to pen a letter of hearty congratulations: *We, the teachers and scholars of Ryde Public School beg to render you a most hearty welcome to Ryde. We desire to inform you that it gives us unbounded satisfaction to know that the important and honorable position of Minister of Education is held by an Australian and by one who received his early education in a Public School. We feel that in you, both teachers and scholars have a fine friend. We trust you may be long spared to take an active part in the good government of the Land we love and [something we might be most reluctant to say to-day] that bye and bye your life may sweetly merge into that Eternal Life which is the reward of every righteous man.*

George Hunt, appointed to Ryde School in 1874, has the honour to be the one to organise the very first Arbor Day in the State and his pupils were the very first ones to plant trees to create greenery to improve the scenery and provide shade for scholars of future generations. It was in 1890.

**ARBOR DAY: A FIRST FOR RYDE** In 1890 Ryde School led the State in establishing Arbor Day in schools. [The word *arbor* is Latin for tree as in the Nullarbor (treeless) Plain.] Although the Department of Public Instruction initiated the event and had undoubtedly chosen Ryde School's large acreage as the venue, the credit for its success must go to Headmaster George Hunt, and to the woman behind him, his wife, whose contributions to the school one inspector in 1878 considered superior to those of her husband.

She had a rare musical ability and had won several medals for singing, needlework and drawing. For many years she actually taught singing, drawing and needlework in the school without remuneration. It was not until 1882, after a passionate plea from George Hunt, that the authorities changed the rule that a Headmaster's wife could not teach in the school. When the new Infants building was planned, she suggested that a flat roof be incorporated in order to provide a look-out — a great idea considering the topography. Official reaction quashed the thought with the statement that anyone who wanted to enjoy the view could walk to the nearby hill. Women of Mrs Hunt's calibre may not have enjoyed the status of those to-day, but nothing could change their innate intelligence and talent, albeit expressed through the medium of their menfolk.

Three years earlier George Hunt had been described in an inspection report as *a man of good address, correct habits and much tact*. To this we must perhaps add environmentalist, for, at a time when Ryde was quite rural and few people thought about the planting of trees as we do to-day, he had thought for natural beautification as well as the welfare of children needing shade in hot weather. From Ryde's example schools everywhere, encouraged by the Minister of Education, embarked on Arbor Day activities. Hunt's programme entailed the planting of conifers along the western boundary of the school grounds then consisting of some 9 acres. These were on both sides of the school lane, as well as a row of variegated pittosporums in front of the school (southern side). In 1920 when the Ryde Council wanted to cut the pine-trees down, they were forty foot high. Two trees were actually felled without permission before a hue and cry was raised that the trees were within the school grounds, casting fine shade and wonderful ornaments to the school lane. Unfortunately, because of the ceding of the school lane in January 1931 to Ryde Council for the making of a public thoroughfare, Tucker Street, some pines were lost and a fresh planting of trees by the new western boundary of the grounds was made. In the author's day there were two of these grand trees, Wollumi Pines, remaining. To-day there is but one, close to the fence by Tucker Street — over one hundred and thirty years old.

The first Arbor Day was a gala day for all, children, teachers and parents. At about noon, Lord and Lady Carrington, escorted by the Mayor, Aldermen and members of the Local School Board, arrived by horse and carriage from Ryde Wharf. After being received by the cadets, the official party heard songs sung by the pupils. An illuminated address was presented to the Governor; speeches were made and trophies presented before the official party had luncheon in the Infants section of the school. Outside the pupils enjoyed a great treat provided by the Local School Board and friends. A special platform for the official tree-planting had been built for the visitors.



The first Arbor Day at Ryde School. Among those present in the Minister for Education Mr Carruthers, Lord Carrington and his aide Captain Trench, Lady Carrington with the spade, Mr Hunt near the flagpole, G. E. Hopkins who painted the mural and John Ednie Brown, Director of Forestry. Amid the pomp and ceremony the School Cadets turned out in their new uniforms and the Band of the Vernon\* Boys played the national Anthem and other tunes. The centenary of this first Arbor Day was celebrated by Ryde School on July 30 1990. \* *The Vernon* was a government training ship for boys.

**DID YOU KNOW:** That the origin of the rhyme 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary' goes back to Mary, Queen of Scots; that the concept of the Three Rs, (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic), was created by Sir William Curtis, who was illiterate; that Australia is the only continent that doesn't have an active volcano or a glacier; that the tallest and most active volcano in Europe is Mount Etna in Italy; that the name Etna comes from the Greek *aitho* meaning to burn?

**RED LETTER DAY: VICE-REGAL VISIT** In March 1892 the new additions to the school had been completed and all were awaiting the day of the official opening. On the 29th Mr Hunt had contacted the Local School Board stating that they were anxious for a definite date: *The surprise is becoming distressing* were his very words, indicating that both he, the staff and the children had prepared something special for the special event. After all, when the new school was built on Pope Ridge in 1877, there had been no official celebration. Mr E. Terry of the Local Board followed up issuing invitations to visitors, the Public Service Board and no less than the Governor and his wife, Lord and Lady Jersey. The big day, May 16 came along. The Vice-Regal party travelled by steamer to the Ryde Wharf where Mr Terry and others met them and transported them in a carriage to the school.

After a welcome by the Headmaster the ladies of the School Board conducted the party to an exhibition consisting of copy, books, exercise books, needlework and pictures by scholars [only the best, of course!]. After luncheon there was entertainment provided by the pupils and a gold key was presented to Lord Jersey to open the new additions. Following his speech the door was officially opened. Lady Jersey was then presented with a painting in oils on an opal shield mounted on crimson plush. Its design incorporated a design of Ryde School amid wild flowers and in the centre of which the words WELCOME TO RYDE SUPERIOR SCHOOL appeared. This was the talented work of Mrs Hunt, who was a driving force in school affairs. There followed an address by Lady Jersey, the presentation to her of a bouquet, the presentation to the Minister of Public Instruction of a gold medal and the latter's response. Then both Lord and Lady Jersey proceeded to plant a tree to commemorate the occasion. Perhaps the trees are still there. The party left for the wharf at 4:30. It was a gala day in the history of Ryde and its school and must have cost quite a few pennies for the locals who supported it, especially when one considers that these were times of economic depression.

### **THE WAR OF THE SEXES**

On June 16 1893 George Wicks of Mountain View, Secretary of the Local School Board, wrote to the Under-Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction. In it he expressed his great concern about a longstanding quarrel between Mr Hunt, the Headmaster of the School, and Miss Lamont, Mistress of the Infants. Unseemly bickering between the two, which had been going on for some three years now, seemed to be endangering the welfare and harmony of the school. The bitterness of the battle between the two sexes had culminated in August 1892 when Mr Hunt felt his painful duty to write a letter of complaint to the authorities stating certain irregularities on the part of Miss Lamont (allowing pupil-teachers to leave school early, giving infants a recess in the afternoon to watch the school cadets drilling); for insubordination in openly defying the Head in staff meetings and rudely interrupting him. The Inspector duly asked the accused to respond, which she did, declaring that there was no truth in the matters.

Moreover, Miss Lamont ridiculed Hunt's charges, maintaining that he was using pupil-teachers as spies and that such pernicious espionage had divided the latter into two hostile parties, thus affecting the morals of the school. Investigation having been made, the charges were either not proven by the weight of evidence or else found to be trivial. Obviously there existed a personality clash between the two, a situation which is often almost impossible to remedy.

#### PLAYGROUND RHYME OF 1880

*Jack and Jill on Parkes Street hill; they cornered there too sharp;  
The cart upset, Jack's rolling yet and Jill — she's playing a harp.*

Inspector Dwyer held his inquiry in June 1893. It was held on five afternoons after school and a report of 48 pages was recorded. The Inspector, virtually a magistrate in the matter, needed all the wisdom of Solomon. *Mr Hunt has been a most popular man in Ryde and still is with all but a small minority. He and the Mistress of the Infants had a misunderstanding and some warm words arising out of the caning by Miss Lamont of Mr Hunt's boys. [He himself, had become an irate parent, dissatisfied with discipline dealt out to his own flesh and blood.] Since then he has looked upon her as an enemy to the school who is working against him openly and privately and whom he considered it necessary to watch from her doing him harm. She, on her part, noticing his change of manner and resenting his method of watching her, has been equally careful to protect herself against him. A perusal of events shows that the most trifling incidents have been misconstrued by both as lines in a scheme of deliberate persecution or aggravation, so that they are incapable of seeing things in their proper proportion. They are both careful people with whose work in school I can find no fault and whose personal characters are irreproachable.*

*I consider that both have acted foolishly, even childishly, and that, in this respect, Mr Hunt is the worse of the two. He allowed himself to be wilfully and grossly blinded in the performance of his duties. He is responsible for the evil consequences resulting from his course of action. I do not recommend the removal of either, as this would create a lot of local feeling and do no good. They are both respected and after the inquiry will, I think, see the necessity of working together in loyal support of each other.*

#### LITERACY TEST

WHENWETHINKTHATEARLYGREEKWITINGUSEDCAPITALLETTERSEXCLUSIVELYTHATITLACKEDSPACINGPUNCTUATIONANDPARAGRAPHINGTHATPEOPLEWROTEFROMRIGHTTOLEFTORLEFTTORIGHTSOMETIMESINBOTHDIRECTIONSINTHESTYLOFTHEXOXPLOUGHINGWEBEGINTOREALISEHOWLANGUAGEHASDEVELOPEDTHATPUNCTUATIONISIMPORTANTTOPREVENTAMBIGUITYISEXEMPLIFIEDBYTHEFOLLOWINGTHEDINGOSNAPPEDVICIOUSLYATUSTWOHOURSATERITWASDEADWEMIGHTALSOASKOURSELVESTHEQUESTIONWNNDDWRDSFRSTCNTNVWLS

Note: The last six words (twenty letters) contain no vowels

The Inspector knew that Hunt had been at Ryde for 19 years, that he had foregone a promotion of £84 per annum in order to remain at the school he had built up with much pride and affection, that the Department was impressed that both Mr and Mrs Hunt were enthusiastic in the work of education and could do the largest amount of good in the district they had long served. Miss Lamont he also appreciated. *She was a comparatively young teacher of competence in her position, but was self-willed and oversensitive to take offence and somewhat impractical.* Her people live at Paddington and her removal at some future time nearer home would be a great advantage to her. The Inspector finally recommended that both parties be informed that the inquiry had found their charges and countercharges rather trivial and should never have been made; that should either of them in future fail to show the necessary tact and judgement in relation to each other, the question of reducing their efficiency classification and removing the officer or officers at fault to a less important position, will have to be considered. The end result was that each of the warring parties was deflated and had to quietly put up with each other until the end of the year when Miss Lamont was transferred to a similar position, but to her advantage.

#### **DISGUSTING BEHAVIOUR — SERIOUS CHARGE BACKFIRES**

On November 24 1894 parent Henry Sims complained officially to Inspector Dwyer about ill-treatment to his son, Reggie, dealt out by Ada Smith of the Infants School. He felt so strong about this that he had decided to withdraw his son from school as long as Miss Smith was still at the school. The reason for his irate charge he explained fully: *Last night Tuesday November 27 between 6 and 7 two children passing by our house called out names to my child. My little boy ran after them a hit with a switch. That was in my presence, and for that Miss Smith kept him in from 9:30 until 4 o'clock, with no food, no drink when it was 90° in the shade. It is monstrous that such a thing should be allowed. The sooner her back is turned on Ryde School, the better for the school.* The Inspector rightly viewed this as a very serious matter for full investigation. When asked for an explanation Miss Smith replied that the punishment meted out was by no means for the reason stated by the parent. In fact she knew nothing of the street incident. The latter actually took place the day after the school punishment! Miss Smith certainly did punish him by not allowing him to mix with the other children during breaks, but he did have food and drink. Young Master Sims, she said, was fearfully dull, but by no means troublesome. In fact he was rarely punished. On this occasion, however, he was isolated for so long because of his disgusting behaviour. Whatever could such an infant do to deserve such punishment? Headmaster asked Miss Smith but she would not reveal the details to her. When approached by a woman, Mrs Hunt, however, she was willing to explain. Reggie Sims had asked Leila Madden if she wanted a drink. Thereupon he pulled down his pants and proceeded to urinate over her face. Other children had witnessed the act.

Headmaster Hunt considered that Sims' charge because of non-payment of school fees. Miss Smith stated that she often had trouble in getting them from Mr Sims. Earlier he had withdrawn other of his children from the Public school to the Church of England school, thus avoiding paying overdue fees. In due course the Inspector invited Mr Sims to meet with him and the accused teacher, but Mr Sims, no doubt having found out the real reason for the punishment of his son, simply wrote back to the Inspector:

*I have decided best to let the matter drop. It is against my nature to nurse grievances.* It was the easiest way out, this being another case of things not being all they seemed at first to be.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Ants do not sleep, but they cease their outside work activities at night.  
One of the oldest words in the English language is town and derives from the Germanic *Zaun*, which means a hedge that often grew around early towns.

Our word *so long* for goodbye comes  
from the Arabic *salaam* and the Hebrew *shalom*.

The Great Pyramid at Giza in Egypt, constructed about 2500 years ago, was the tallest building in the world until the Eiffel tower was erected in Paris in 1899.



The above 1896 illustration advertising ladies' costumes was accompanied by the following: In the late 1890s cycle races were extremely exciting spectator sports and many women attended. Because racing was associated with danger, bad language, gambling and a certain disrepute, women were rarely allowed on the track. The very rumour of an impending ladies' race led one journalist to comment: *The difficulties and dangers for women inherent in riding in long skirts with petticoats were obvious. Skirts still tended to become 'inflated'. That women's races will be held is unfortunately unavoidable, because there is a class of unmanly men which will derive pleasure from seeing girls with perspiring faces and heaving breasts.*

**THE DAY EVERY PUPIL LEARNED THE MEANING OF KINDNESS:** In 1896 the British Empire celebrated with great enthusiasm the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In Sydney on Jubilee Day selected pupils from each school including Ryde attended the Association Ground, Sydney, where the Governor presented each child with a commemorative medal. The medal made of bronze, which was slightly larger than the florin (two-shilling piece), bore on the face two representations of the Queen. One when she ascended the throne in 1837, the other as she appeared in 1896. On the reverse side appeared the Coat of Arms and the inscription Diamond Jubilee Australia's Celebration. How proud were the school representatives and how envious were those who missed out! A gala day, however was in store for them, for locally it had been decided to celebrate at the school the birthday of the Mother Queen of Ryde, namely Mrs Jane Darvall (nee McCullough) who married major Darvall, 45 years her senior, in 1853 and was widowed in 1869. In her time Mrs Darvall practised philanthropy, giving land for the Anglican Church in Gladesville in 1878, and making donations to works of charity and gifts to needy families. She was so respected and loved that in 1883 the children of Ryde representing the community at large presented her with a marble bust of herself.

After being heartily greeted at the school with flowers and banners of birthday congratulations, the guest of honour repaired to the Infants Department. She had conceived her own way of celebrating the occasion, a conception based on her thought for every child. She proceeded to meet every child individually and pin on its breast — a Diamond Jubilee medal exactly similar to those awarded by the Governor! Imagine the delight of the recipients. Each one must have felt very special, not only on account of the medal, but also because of the cheery words spoken by their benefactor. After an address by Headmaster Mr Hunt and the singing of the National Anthem, Mrs Darvall and her entourage moved to the distribution of medals to each girl and boy in the Primary Department. Mr Terry, Chairman of the School Board, assisted as each child was called forward. Those of them who had already received a medal on Jubilee Day were re-presented with the same medal in an envelope. The Mother Queen of Ryde, who had been upwards of 50 years in the district, then addressed the children, counselling them to be industrious and above all to cultivate kindness one to another. There was not a single child untouched by the old lady's example. Each had learned the meaning of kindness. She first addressed the girls, explaining that the medals had been given to commemorate the reign of as good Christian woman and a good wife and had set a good example to all. Mrs Darvall urged her hearers to follow this example and to be kind to one another. She counselled the boys to be industrious, and above all to cultivate kindness to one another. The public schools, she said, laid the foundation of the greatness of this colony. Her friends, Mr and Mrs Hunt and the teachers of the Ryde School she had to thank for many kindnesses. She had now been upward of fifty years in the district and had never known a school child to do a wrong thing. The children had always a smile on their faces going and returning from school.

The inspired children conducted themselves impeccably and sang several songs including *Australia's Greeting to the Queen*, *Australia's Sunny Clime*, *Australia's Sun bright Land of Liberty*, *Rule Britannia* and *God Save the Queen*. Mrs Darvall had thought of everyone on her birthday. For every child in Ryde school the kind Mrs Darvall was a true marvel. Mr Hunt spoke of the many kindnesses and assistance he had received from Mrs Darvall.

*To rich and poor alike, a friend in time of need,  
In practice, as in theory true, in word as well as deed.*

### IT'S FUN O'CLOCK AT SCHOOL

Teacher: *Who can tell me what you know about the poet, John Milton?* Thoughtful pupil: *As I recall, Sir, it was some time after he was married that he was inspired to write the epic poem called "Paradise Lost". After he lost his wife, he wrote "Paradise Regained"*

I learned to read and *riot* when I was in First Class.

**SCHOLASTIC CURIOSITY:** Dull pupils used to be referred to as dunces. Strange to tell, the word *dunce* derives from the name of a great Scottish intellectual, John Duns Scotus given to his disciples. The English tradition of putting a cone-shaped dunce's cap on a slow-witted pupil was a most humiliating and retrograde practice.

### LITERATURE FOR THE WORKERS

Pupil A: *My Dad reckons there's only one book for these hard times and everyone should read it.* Pupil B: *What's the name of it?* Pupil A: *Work like Helen B. Merry*

### LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

Two boys were talking in the playground about how good their fathers were. **A:** *Look, my father is so fast! When he goes to bed, he puts off the light switch by the doorway, moves to his bed and tucks himself in — all before the light bulb goes out. You can't beat that!*

**B:** *Oh yes I can! My father works for the Government. He knocks off every day at 5 o'clock — and he's home by 3:30!*

**C:** *Back in 1935 a local clergyman received a phone call from the Ryde Railway Station Parcels Office, saying that there was a parcel waiting for his collection. It's a packet of books that I had ordered in Sydney, said the man of the cloth. Well, warned the clerk, you'd better hurry, they're leaking.*



#### **EARLY MARK TO MARK GOVERNOR'S VISIT**

On October 30 1897, ten years after the accession to the throne of 18-year-old Queen Elizabeth, pupils and staff were granted permission to attend the unveiling of the Ryde Jubilee Fountain on the corner of Church Street and Glebe Street. The pupils participated by singing several songs. When the road, now Victoria Road, was widened in the 1920s, the fountain, designed by Arthur Collingridge, was removed to position at the triangular corner of Blaxland and Victoria Roads. — Photo by courtesy of The Ryde Historical Society.

## FOND FAREWELL TO A POPULAR PAIR

The highly respected Headmaster George Hunt and his talented wife, the guiding spirits of the Ryde Superior School, retired in December 1897 after nearly a quarter of a century's service to the school. One example of the community's appreciation for them was a few years earlier when Mrs Darvall, the Terrys, the Moses and the Lovells, knowing that the Hunts had nearly worn out their own piano in connection with school concerts, got together to present the Hunts with a new one — quite an expensive gift! On their retirement they were presented by friends and ex-pupils with a signed address as well as a silver urn and salver.

*We, the undersigned friends, ex-students and residents of Ryde, desire to express our gratitude towards you and your esteemed wife, for the many valuable services you both have rendered, not only to Ryde, but to the Colony generally, during the twenty-four years in which you have laboured in our midst as Headmaster of our Public School. Your teachers and scholars have been scattered throughout the length and breadth of our land, and wherever we travel, we meet respectable citizens who have been educated at your school. We trust that you will be long spared to enjoy the fruits of your labours and that, wherever you may be, our Heavenly father may bestow his blessing of health and happiness upon you and all the members of your family.*

The address was signed by Mrs Jane Darvall, Mrs R. Terry, Mrs Matthews, Mrs Skinner, Miss Foulcher, Hon. H. Moses, M. L. C., and Messrs Ed. Terry, R. French, C. Krust, J. Humphreys, J. W. Scott, G. Trevitt, E. Trevitt, W.A. Foulcher, J. Sharp, J. Kelly, H. Skinner, W. Small, H. Hay, C. Clarke, B.E. Gallard, E. Angrove, C. Cakehead, C. Folkard, T. H. Neely, J. Redshaw and W. Black. — Ryde 19<sup>th</sup> December 1896.

From 1880 it became compulsory for children between the ages of six and fourteen to attend school for a period of no less than 70 days. Exemptions were granted only for sickness, infirmity, fear of infection, being more than two miles from the nearest school or else, being already educated to the standard required. Once a pupil had reached the standard of education required, an appropriate Certificate like the one here of 1897 would be issued.

The standard of education was based on the three Rs: 1. Being able to read the 4th Book of readers used in Public Schools. [4th class in those days included pupils of 13 and 14 years of age.] 2. Being able to write in a neat and legible hand, and without serious errors in spelling, a passage of 12 lines dictated slowly from such a book. 3. Proficiency in arithmetic, to work correctly questions of ordinary difficulty in Simple and Compound Rules, Reduction, Proportion and Practice.



The above postcard posted at 1 p.m. on December 3 1904, when each State of Australia, had their own postage stamps, was a message from the firm F. Lasseter and Co. Pty Ltd of George Street, Sydney, established in 1820, to advise the dispatching that day by rail of one stove well packed and in sound condition. There were a Lasseter Store in George Street, a bulk store in York Street plus a factory in Clarence Street.

#### LATIN IN OUR LIVES

The old trams from Ryde bore a sign of their destination: Railway Square or Circular Quay via George Street. We had no idea that *via* was a Latin word meaning *by way of*. We accepted that the quay was a wharf for the Sydney ferries, without knowing that it is from the French for wharf: *quai*.

To gain access to the ferry we would queue up and insert a coin into a machine. We thought that *queue* like *quay* was a peculiar spelling. It was also from the French meaning a tail. No doubt we recalled our previous visit, unconscious that *previous* was from Latin *prae via* meaning the path before.

Our English language consists of some 55 per cent of Latin words, *per cent* being just two of them; about 35% derive from Anglo-Saxon after the invasion of Britain by the Angles, Jutes and Saxons from present-day Denmark and Germany. Ten percent are from Greek, mainly medical and archaeological terms, while the rest are from other tongues. Celtic, the original tongue of the British Isles, comprises just one per cent!

# THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE ELECTRONIC CALCULATORS AND DECIMAL CURRENCY

## Arithmetic

May 13 1899

Reduce mls. - fur. - pls. - yds. - ft. -

$$\begin{array}{r}
 11 \text{ mls.} - 7 \text{ pls.} - 24 \text{ yds.} - 4 \text{ ft.} - 11 \text{ in.} \\
 \underline{8 \text{ fur.}} \\
 95 \text{ pls.} \\
 \underline{40} \\
 5800 \text{ yds.} \\
 \underline{24} \\
 5824 \text{ ft.} \\
 \underline{2142097} \\
 21048 \frac{1}{2} \text{ in.} \\
 \underline{4} \\
 25052 \frac{1}{2} \text{ feet} \\
 \underline{631568} \\
 12 \text{ inches.} \\
 \underline{7578816} \\
 11 \\
 \underline{7578827}
 \end{array}$$



$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{£. S. D.} \quad \text{£. S. D.} \\
 4000 \text{ } 1668 \text{ } 10 \text{ } 17 \text{ } 5 \frac{1}{2} \text{ } (41 \text{ } 14 \text{ } 1 \frac{1}{2} \text{ Ans}) \\
 \underline{16004} \\
 6830 \text{ R} \\
 4001 \\
 2829 \\
 4000 \text{ } 5659 \text{ } 20 \text{ } (14 \text{ } 7598 \text{ } 6824 \text{ } 9 \text{ } 0 \frac{1}{2} \text{ } (8 \text{ } 19 \text{ } 7 \frac{1}{2} \text{ } 3 \\
 \underline{4001} \\
 16587 \\
 16004 \text{ R } 7598 \text{ } 149269 \text{ } (19 \\
 \underline{583} \\
 4000 \text{ } 7001 \text{ } (1 \text{ } 7598 \text{ } 75989 \\
 \underline{4001} \\
 3000 \\
 4000 \text{ } 12005 \text{ } (3 \text{ } 7598 \text{ } 58884 \text{ } (7 \\
 \underline{4001} \\
 12003 \\
 000 \text{ Over } 7598 \text{ } 22794 \text{ } (3 \\
 \underline{10 \text{ } 11 \text{ } 11} \\
 3962 \text{ } 76 \text{ } 274 \\
 5 \text{ } 5 \text{ } 11 \frac{1}{2} \text{ R} \\
 3968 \text{ } 2 \text{ } 9 \frac{1}{2}
 \end{array}$$

A 12-year-old girl's sum in 6<sup>th</sup> class back in 1899. Readers, you are invited to try the sums for yourselves without the use of a calculator. Which system is preferable, the British or the metric?

**PARENTAL HELP:** "My Dad says there are two kinds of gin: *oxygen* and *hydrogin*. *Oxygen* is pure gin and *hydrogin* is a mixture of gin and water."

Well over a century ago that 6th Class girl at the Public School shows her work in arithmetic. It was in the days of pounds, shillings and pence denoted by £ or L. S and D, initials of Latin letters denoting the ancient Roman coins Librae, Soldi and Denarii. Those old Imperial measures certainly presented untold difficulties for the majority of pupils compared with the metric system and decimal currency of to-day. At the time the penny was divided into farthings (one fourth). The *simple* exercises here were firstly, to divide 166,870 pounds seventeen shillings and five pence three farthings by 4001; secondly, to multiply eight pounds nineteen shillings and seven pence three farthings by 7598. Each step of the workings is shown, in each case converting the remainder in turn to shillings, pence and farthings. The reader is asked to check the accuracy. No calculators or computers are allowed. In these early days of school people referred to the three Rs: Reading, Writing and 'Rithmetic. Now it may be a case of three more Rs: Remedial Reading, Remedial Writing and Remedial 'Rithmetic. Sometimes, sadly, there is the fourth R: riotin'!

#### **TEACHER TARGETED**

There is no occupation in the world where the shortcomings of the individual become more apparent to both the public and the teacher's employer than that of a teacher. Pupils, of course, take home their impressions, often telling tales out of school which are half truths and therefore capable of creating problems. Pleasing pupils, parents and citizens is a mammoth task and a huge responsibility for teachers, while their social life, especially in a small community, can be quite hazardous. Teachers, like any other people, are a mixed bag — good, medium and poor. Their job is not the simple one just handling materials. They are humans with strengths and weaknesses dealing with humans with all their vices and virtues, with individual differences, diverse social and cultural backgrounds and varied standards of behaviour.

In October 1900 a letter of complaint against Ryde teacher, Mr Woods, came into the hands of the Secretary of the Public Service Board: *Sir, seeing that no action has been taken by you for the removal of one, Mr Woods, schoolteacher at Ryde Public School, who was about a fortnight ago caught by Police Sergeant Ross in the Royal Hotel Ryde, gambling with the lowest of the low, to say nothing of the drinking, and afterwards (last Tuesday) summoned as a witness in the case (but not called against the publican of the said hotel who was fined £5 with a caution). It is my intention, if no action is taken by you, to remove my children from school and I believe others will do the same. My children have told me more than once that Headmaster Henry has had to send Mr Woods home as he was drunk. For this I cannot vouch, but I have, more than twice, seen Woods frequenting a so called grocer's shop (which is nothing but a sly-grog shop) with others of noted drinking capabilities. Now, Sir, I ask you, would you allow your children to be under a master of this character?* The letter was concluded — *Yours, a Father.*

Despite the anonymous nature of the complaint the Headmaster, Mr L. Henry, was asked to respond. He positively denied that Mr Woods was ever drunk at school, that he, himself taught in the same room as Mr Woods, that the only time that Mr Woods had been out of school during school hours had been in his capacity as Captain of the cadets on parade or at target practice with the boys. As for the hotel affair, Sergeant Ross told Mr Henry that Mr Woods had no connection with the case at all.

The Headmaster further stated: *I presume that the "sly-grog shop" is the grocer who holds a wine licence, one of the main businesses in town. Woods is generally liked and respected. No whisper detrimental to his character has ever reached me. Like most anonymous complaints this has as its origin apparently — private animus [animosity].* Perhaps the teacher had not patronised a certain shopkeeper, had not bought fruit from a certain orchard, or had offended someone by sneezing or falling asleep in church. In a small community there was always someone of the mind *I'll get you for this!* There was no further action taken by the authorities who could hardly reply to an anonymous letter. If the writer of the letter of complaint carried out his threat to withdraw his children from the school after Mr Woods remained at his post, his name would have become obvious to the school.

#### **EVILS OF GAMBLING SLATED**

On the last day of 1905 L. T. Folkard of Linsley Street, Gladesville, wrote to the Secretary of the Australian Protestant Defence Association: *I wish to bring to your notice an evil which seems to be creeping into bazaars etc. held in connection with some of our public Schools and one I am sure it is the duty of our Council to nip in the bud. The evil to which I refer is gambling in the form of raffles — used in Ryde Council Chambers to raise money for Ryde Superior School.* The raffle consisted in people paying sixpence for a ticket, all of which were placed in a hat and a winner drawn therefrom. The Association duly complained to the Department of public Instruction which simply responded by stating that raffles in school are not sanctioned And that any application for permission therefor was invariably refused. The association was still not satisfied and protested, but no further action was taken.

#### **MISUSE OF CANE ON GIRL**

From her home, Clifton House, Ryde, Edith Lloyd penned a letter dated August 1 1905 to the Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction in which she complained about the ungentlemanly conduct of Headmaster Thomas Thompson. She explained that she had written a request that he punish her child, Fairey, by any means other than the cane, that he had ignored this and a further note from her. Such discourtesy and lack of communication naturally increased the anger of the parent. When she found out that a small child was put in charge of younger ones while the teacher was absent, and that that girl was hitting the children with a cane (no doubt copying the teacher) she sent a stronger note to Mr Thompson.

She did receive a reply this time but immediately after when her child was kept in at dinner time, she considered this quite unjust but said nothing. The next week, however, after her child had been caned, it was the last straw. She called on the Head and was received in a most abrupt manner. She claimed he was rude and insulting. No doubt there were warm words on both sides. Mrs Lloyd accused the Head of being rude and insulting and asked for an official inquiry.

On August 15 an inquiry was held. The caning came about through Miss Primrose, who unwisely announced to the class that any child with four or more errors in dictation would be caned. The hapless Fairey Lloyd had no less than 15 out of 20 words wrong and was caned one stroke on the hand. Of course, it is ridiculous that a child should be caned for not knowing. The system of classification of teachers in those days generally depended on the performance of the pupils during inspection.

This, sadly, encouraged teachers to try to enforce learning. The teacher claimed that she had forgotten about Mrs Lloyd's requests about punishment and charged Mrs Lloyd with being exceedingly offensive to her. The charges against the Head were not proven, but he had had his feathers ruffled and perhaps learned to communicate with parents instead of ignoring them. Miss Primrose was instructed not to use the cane again. The inquiry found that Mrs Lloyd had grounds for complaint because what Mr Thompson had promised her in respect to the chastisement of her child had not been fulfilled, but that the trouble boiled over because of Mrs Lloyd's vituperous attack on the Head who did not know at the time about Miss Primrose's caning. In all, Mrs Lloyd gained what she had long sought: her child would never be caned again. Attention to a parent's concern in the first place and diplomatic communication could have saved a lot of trouble.

## **FROM RYDE TO RYDE**

The following letter from the Mayor of Ryde, dated April 15, 1907, was sent to His Worship the Mayor of Ryde, Isle of Wight, Great Britain:

*We, the Mayor and Aldermen of Ryde in the state of the Commonwealth of Australia, have the honor to forward to you through the British Empire League of Australia — a flag— the Union Jack. The flag is presented to the boys and girls of your historic town by the pupils of the Superior Public School of this Municipality and we desire that you will hand it to the Principal of the School of your town, or dispose of it at his discretion, as it is to be an Australian greeting for as many boys and girls as possible.*

*You will, we are sure, recognize this "hands across the Sea" sentiment that has inspired this movement — the boys and girls here extending the hand of friendship and race-kinship and all that those words mean to their British cousins — the boys and girls of Ryde, England. We, as the Municipal representatives of parents, officially concur in the sending of the flag and shall join, right heartily, on Empire day in the Empire wish: God Save the King.*

*Sydney A. Bearn, Mayor and eight Aldermen,*

*Town Clerk and J. Parry, Headmaster.*

Sending an English Flag to England is like our sending coals to Newcastle! In 1900, with the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia, there was a winning design chosen for a new Australian flag. In 1903 this was approved by King Edward VII, though slightly changed in 1909 by the addition of a seventh point to the large star representing Australia's mandate, the Territory of Papua. Nevertheless, that flag did not become the official National Australian Flag until 1953.

#### EARLY TWINNING OF TOWNS

On Saturday November 16 1907 a school and community ceremony took place in the Ryde Town Hall on the occasion of the Unfurling the Flag, The flag was one which had been sent from the schoolchildren of Ryde's sister town on the isle of Wight, England. Volunteers of F Company A.I.R. and the Town Band were there, the children sang patriotic songs, danced the maypole, gave drill displays and recited poem of greetings to the children in England. An Australian flag was to be sent to Ryde in England. To quote the beginning and end of the poem written for the occasion by E. S. Smithurst, Honorary Secretary of the the Flag League:

*It was at Ryde by Parramatta's stream*

*And round the school the girls and boys were spread*

*To cheer the grand old flag whose azure gleam*

*With crosses red and white flew overhead.*



Maypole Dancing at Ryde School 1908. — Courtesy of Ryde City Library.

*And so from Ryde beneath the Southern Cross  
To Ryde the Island Queen neath northern light  
Goes the glad greeting, the world seas across,  
God bless the kiddies in the Isle of Wight.*

*That was their gift to go beyond the seas  
Unto their kin in Britain's southern isle,  
But first it floated in the Austral breeze  
Where Sydneys sleep and smile.*

### **THE CLASS RECORD OF 1914**

In the possession of the Ryde District Historical Society are two copies of the *School Record* for Class 4B which were diligently compiled by teacher Frank Smith. These treasures were donated by Archie Evans in 1995. They contain a priceless record of pupils' names, their attendance and achievements in quarterly examinations. In one examination, for example, Eric Woodcock topped with 455 marks out of 550. There are History and Geography notes, calendar events commemorated (such as the opening of the Sydney Victoria Markets in 1898). There are puzzles, tongue-twisters, philosophical sayings and many items of interest. Texts of songs revealed a full and most enlightening version of *A Long Way to Tipperary*, which contains great wit that is virtually unknown to people today. For that reason it is reproduced here.

*1. Up to mighty London came an Irishman one day.  
As the streets are paved with gold, sure everyone was gay;  
Singing songs of Piccadilly, Strand and Leicester Square  
Till Paddy got excited, then he shouted to them there.*

***Chorus:** It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go.  
It's a long way to Tipperary to the sweetest girl I know.  
Good-bye Piccadilly, Farewell Leicester Square.  
It's a long, long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right there!*

*2. Paddy wrote a letter to his Irish Molly O'  
Saying "Should you not receive it, write and let me know;  
If I make mistakes in spelling, Molly dear," said he,  
Remember, it's the pen that's bad, don't put the blame on me.*

**Chorus**

*3. Molly wrote a neat reply to Irish Paddy O'  
Saying 'Mike Maloney wants to marry me, and so  
Leave the Strand and Piccadilly, or you'll be to blame,  
For love has drove me silly — hoping you're the same.'*

**Chorus**

Two more extracts: A tongue-twister by Bessie Moody: *Is Fanny fond of fine flesh of freshly fried flying-fish?* A terrible sympathetic thought for pupils of the era who had decayed teeth quite early because of the lack of fluoride in the tap water: *Did you ever think that every minute of the day someone, somewhere, is having a tooth pulled? This proves that there is someone worse off than you!*

**A PUPIL RECALLS:**

*In the late nineteen thirties, when going home from school down Parkes Street on a hot summer's day, we often went into someone's front garden to use the garden tap to quench our thirst, whereupon one the first finished of our group would retreat to the footpath, put his hands around his mouth like a megaphone and call out loudly: "Hey Missus, there's a pig in your yard!"*

**PRSVRYPRFCTMN**

**VRKPTHSPRCPTSTN**

The above inscription appears over the Ten Commandments in the chancel of a small church in Wales. The addition of a single letter, repeated at various intervals, makes it not only intelligible but appropriate to the situation. What is the missing letter and where does it go in the inscription? See p. 68.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 20TH CENTURY



- Opening of the new Ryde Town Hall on August, 1903, on the corner of Glebe Street [present Blaxland Road] and Tucker Street with the Mayor, officers and dignitaries present. The left front window indicates the Town Clerk's Office. Above the columns the words: Erected 1903 TOWN HALL E. M. Betts Mayor. The street in front is kerbed and guttered and carries a single set of tramlines, one leading to the Ryde Terminus, the other up Church Street en route to Ryde Station in present-day West Ryde. Outside the terrace over the colonnade is a political sign commending the Australian Labour Party. On the left of the building is Tucker Street, named after an early pioneer, leading up to Ryde Public School, the stone building being almost obscured by the now rare Wollumi Pines planted in the school grounds on Ryde's first Arbour Day in 1890. On the Tucker Street footpath by the Town Hall are steps to the footpath from exits used to clear people after a function and particularly in case of fire.

**JEST A MOMENT:** Two ears of wheat ran full pelt up Victoria Road. What were they when they reached the top? — Puffed wheat. A Ryde farmer went into Parramatta on Friday, slept there overnight and came home on Friday. — *How come? — Well, his horse was named Friday.*

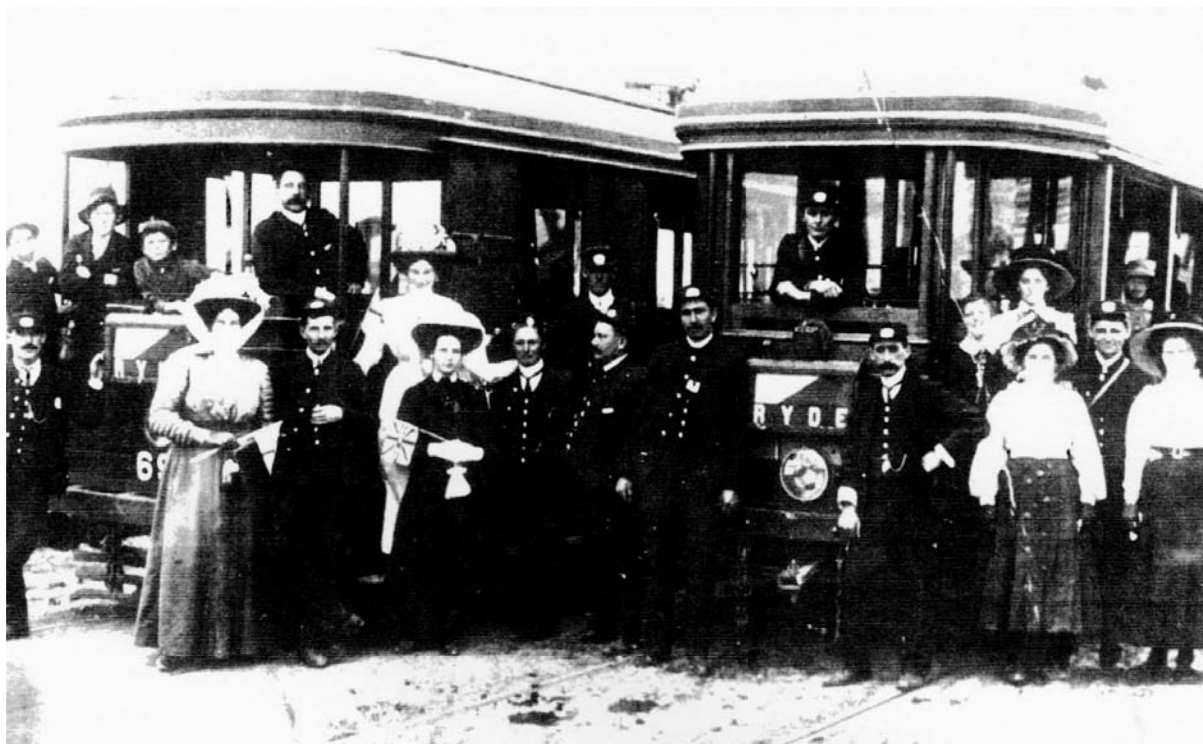


Scene at the Ryde tram terminus at Hattons Flat on June 12 1910 showing the last horse-tram and the first electric tram, a double carriage, to link Ryde with Gladesville and the line to Circular Quay. Because of the restriction of a single line as far as Gladesville Bridge which involved five passing loops, the complete 11-mile journey Ryde to the Quay initially took 76 minutes. After duplication of the line in 1936 the time was reduced to 58-61 minutes. For decades pupils who lived beyond reasonable walking distance of the school could take the tram for just one penny. — Courtesy of Ryde Historical Society.

- **June 12 1910:** The first day of the electric tram at Ryde was a gala day for the community. Adults in their Sunday best arrived by foot and by horse and buggy to witness a grand procession led by the Mayor, John Redshaw, mounted on a white charger, and an official welcome to the first tram. Unfortunately, the spectacle was not destined to be officially enjoyed by the pupils of Ryde School. Those daring ones who did skip off during recess that day for an adventurous ride on the tram from Church Street to the terminus were later thrashed six of the best by Headmaster Raddy Radford. After school, however, many of the school children gleefully took advantage of a ride on the tram, which was free on this auspicious day. In its early years the tram service was just a single line.

### CURIOSITY

The vehicle of conveyance which we call tram-car runs on steel rails. Originally, however, it ran on timber rails. The original word *tram* means timber. In early mining in remote places timber rails were in common use. The grand advantage of the electric traction was that it did not pollute the air.



Scene at the Terminus south of the present Regional Shopping Centre of the first trams at Ryde, June 12, 1910. — Courtesy of The Ryde Historical Society.

- **1914:** The tramline from Ryde Station along Victoria Road to Church Street, Top Ryde, was built. For teachers travelling by rail, this was a decided advantage but involved quite a lot of time, as illustrated by the following example: In October 1919 Dorothy Groves in her first year of teaching was transferred from Strathfield to Ryde. She found that to arrive at school on time, that is, by 9 o'clock, she would have to leave her home at Pendle hill at 6:15! Unusually, she was granted permission to arrive at 9:25. Her morning travel schedule was as follows: 7:40 leave home to walk to station one and half miles; 8:09 train to Homebush to change train to Strathfield and change train again for northern line; arrive Ryde Station 8:50, wait for Tram; 9:20 arrive at Church Street terminus; walk down school lane (Tucker Street) arrive at school at 9:25. She asked for a transfer which was mercifully granted at the end of the year.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Dog's saliva is an antiseptic and can help wounds. Human saliva may have the same human qualities as in the expression *to lick one's wounds*.

The caduceus — the classical medical symbol of two serpents wrapped around a staff — comes from an ancient Greek legend in which snakes revealed the practice of medicine to human beings.

The English language is not known for its phonetic spelling. Take the word *queue*. It is from the French and means a tail of an animal, but we use it to refer to a line of people or vehicles waiting in turn.



The scene at the junction of Church Street and Glebe Street [now Blaxland Road] shows the tram in Church Street and kiddies on their way to school via Tucker Street next turn on the left. In the centre of the street the Jubilee Fountain unveiled on October 30, 1897, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the accession to the British throne of Queen Victoria. — Courtesy of Ryde Historical Society.

### **SOME GEMS FROM PUPILS' EXAM PAPERS**

John Macarthur crossed an English sheep with a Spanish *mariner*.  
 When Caesar asked Cleopatra to be his mistress, she *reclined*.  
 The sun is the centre of the solar *cistern*.

There are special schools in the city for *depraved* children.  
 In my grandfather's day they used to use *hores* to pull the plough.  
 Bach was a great musician. He had 19 children  
 and used to practise on an old *spinster* in the attic.

The government in India is displaying birth control signs  
 in every *conceivable* place.

When the Spanish Armada was sighted,  
 Sir Francis Drake was still playing with his *bowels*.  
 The Prime Minister went to the *Privy* for advice.

We mail-order all our clothes from the capital and get them by *partial* post.

**February 1 1916:** Issue of the first School Magazine to Public Schools.

# THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE

OF  
Literature for our Boys and Girls.

PART I ... .. FOR CLASS III.

[Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, for Transmission by Post as a Newspaper.]

VOL. I.—No. 2.

SYDNEY.

MARCH 1, 1916.

## HOW WHITE STAR WENT SHOPPING.

1. "Now, White Star," said Mrs. Blossom, "this is your birthday, so I am going to give you a great treat in honour of the event."

White Star at once sat up on his hind legs, hung down his forepaws, and opened his mouth.

2. Mrs. Blossom popped into it a piece of cake. Then she laughed, and patted his head, calling him her dear, wise doggie.

Although White Star was only three years old, he was really very wise indeed.

3. Mrs. Blossom, you see, said so, and dear old Granny Blossom, too, used to praise his cleverness, and call him all kinds of loving names.

As for little Flossie, who was only two years older than himself, well, all I can say is, that the two used to play and romp together all day long, so they must have been the best of friends.



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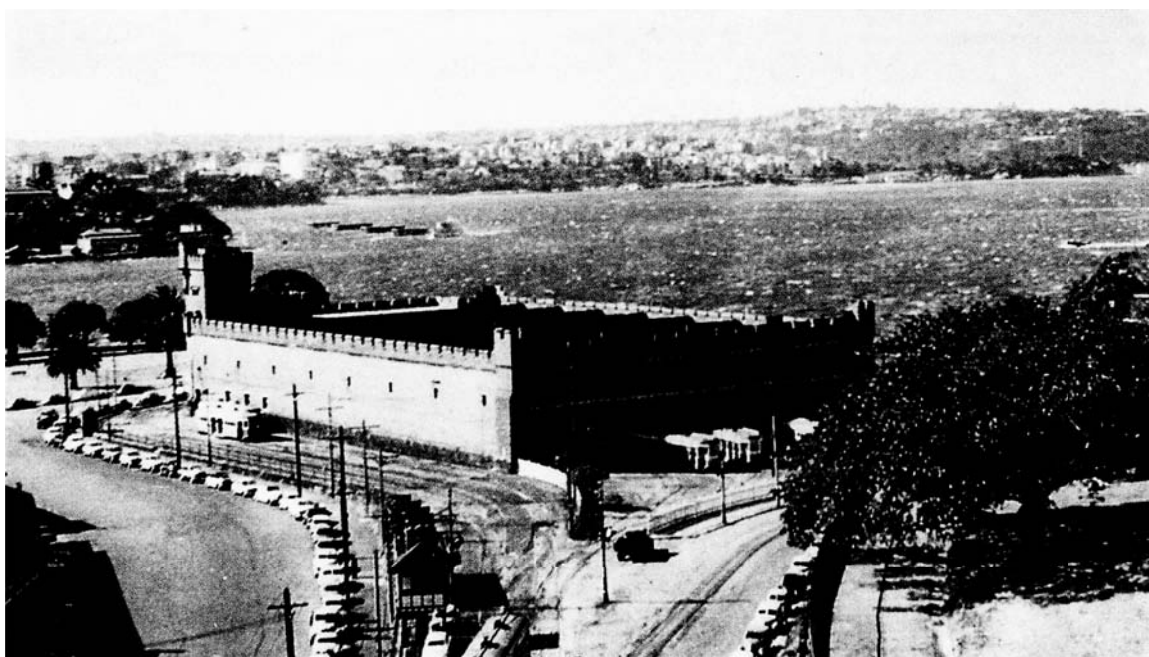
**April 5 1916:** Fifty senior boys were allowed to attend a film matinee in the Sydney Town Hall, the title of the silent movie being *Britain Prepared*. It was a great privilege. They saw more than the movie, as they strolled around *the big smoke*. First, since they were in George Street, they marveled at the grandeur of the Queen Victoria Building.



They then walked to Circular Quay where they saw the Paddle Steam Ferries the horse-drawn cabs, and crowds of people.



They moved on to Bennelong Point to what looked like a fort — the Sydney Tram Depot which was built on the site of Fort Macquarie [named after Governor Macquarie] demolished in 1902. In 1959, after Sydney trams had been re-placed by buses, the fake fort was removed to make way for the building of the Sydney Opera House.



- **September 22 1916:** W. R. Brown of *Laurelbank*, Church Street, on behalf of the Boy Scouts' Association, applied for permission to build a Scout Hall on school land measuring 30 ft x 150 ft situated immediately behind the Council buildings. Approval was given.

**January 31 1917:** Headmaster W. Jarvie applied for leave for attending court for the following reason: *I was passing down the street a few nights ago when a man said: "Anyone who goes to the front is a bloody mongrel". Evidently someone informed the police and I have been summoned as one who was passing at the time and heard the language.* It seems that the offence was for speaking bad language in a public domain rather than expressing unpatriotic sentiments.

**July 5 1918:** W. H. Higginbotham of Franklin Avenue Ryde and Secretary of the Australian Labour Party Political Labour League wrote a complaint to the Minister of Education that Ryde School was short of teachers, instancing one class of 52 boys and 45 girls. The Minister replied that no teacher was available, *as so many have been patriotic enough to go to war.*

#### SOME PRICES IN 1921

A man's ready-to-wear suit cost 75/-, whereas a tailor made suit of English or Australian tweed was worth £5. The trip to Manly, seven miles from Sydney and a thousand miles from care, cost 6d for adults and 3d for children.

**Note:** Closing of schools at 3:30 p.m. was introduced in October 1918.

#### CELEBRATIONS IN 1919 AND 1926

After the terrible Great War finished in 1918, official peace celebrations had to wait until the following year to allow ex-servicemen time to return from the fronts. Every community and school became involved in the celebrations.

Gladesville School's participation with a ceremony followed by a picnic in the grounds of the Gladesville Hospital had to be postponed because of the Spanish Influenza epidemic. All pupils (including ex-pupils and children not yet enrolled) who were under 16 on Armistice day 1918 were presented with a Peace Medal.

Another big day celebrated by the community and all the schools of the district was Festival Day, August 27 1926 during *Back To Ryde Week* (22-29 August). All schools in the Municipality were closed to allow pupils to participate in the various activities. There were lectures in the Town Hall on Old Ryde delivered by members of the Historical Society and by other persons well versed in the subject. There were sports and picnics in Ryde Park. The Mayor and Councillors as well as a large number of citizens celebrated this auspicious occasion.

#### **MUCH ADO ABOUT LITTLE**

On May 4 1921 Mrs Towel of Glebe Street (then between Devlin and Princes Street, now Victoria Road) complained to the Department of Education that Mrs Haynes had taken a ball from her girl in the playground and not returned it. *It is not the value of the ball I am after, but I have repeatedly asked for it and she refuses to give it back and makes a laughing stock of my child.* The teacher defended herself, stating that she had cause to reprimand Clarice Towell aged 12 plus while she had charge of the upper classes for drill. *She deliberately bounced the ball after I had cautioned her not to do so. Had the parent called to see me, a satisfactory explanation would have been given. The story about being made a laughing stock is a fabrication, seeing that I do not now come into contact with the child.* The Headmaster, D. Pyke, indicated that the incident had occurred back in December 1920, that Clarice had asked for the ball in February 1921 and he had referred her to Mrs Haynes. The latter said she had retained the ball to enforce discipline and protect school windows. Mrs Haynes was well-known as a strict disciplinarian who had only to clap her hands to get instant attention. The parties were finally brought together and the grand affair was finally settled with the return of the ball to its owner.

Some twelve years later Mrs Haynes was shocked to find herself accused of a serious offence. On October 24 1933 she was issued with a summons to appear in the Children's Court on November 2 on a charge by a Mr Benjamin of having assaulted his daughter Eileen aged 12 on Friday October 20. She hastened to report the matter through official channels: *The child is in 4th class in the room adjacent to mine. While her class teacher was away, I had occasion to caution her twice for causing a noise and disturbance. When she offended again, I sent for her. I punished her by smacking her arm — using my right hand. That was the extent of the punishment given at 10:30 a.m. She continued at school until 3:30 p.m., showing no sign of maltreatment, yet she is supposed to have an injury to an eye caused by a blow from a ring — and bruises in various parts of her body.*

*None of these injuries was received by her from any person in the school. Mrs Haynes statement was supported by the Mistress of Girls department, C. May who stated: Earlier in the year the child's parents visited the school and made charges against their own child, stating that she was uncontrollable, untrustworthy and incapable of telling the truth. At that time she had, without her parents' knowledge an account with the local chemist. The mother called again and asked me to have Eileen moved to a State Home, so that she could be rid of her. On one occasion I told the father he must stop beating the child, as she was hardening. He agreed he had often thrashed her.*

Much to Mrs Haynes' relief, Mrs Benjamin withdrew the case. It is not hard to guess who had inflicted the injuries on the child. Now Mrs Haynes had wisely sought legal advice on the matter, and when there was no longer any need to appear in court, she applied to the Department of Education for payment of her legal expenses in defending herself as a teacher against a charge alleged to have taken place in the school. The Department was quite uncharitable about the matter, maintaining that the expenses were of a private nature. One can imagine Mrs Haynes reaction.

#### **DOES THIS TOUCH YOUR FUNNYBONE?**

It was all perfectly normal and legal in earlier times, such as the 1920s, but a document headed thus: *Messrs O'Brien and Company — Agreement with His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Fifth — for the emptying of closet pans* might make you chuckle and wonder who actually might be doing the job.

#### **ATTACKS FROM THE BARRACKS A CASE OF FEAR MISCHIEF AND TRUTH**

On December 6 1927 a complaint was written by Mr S. Birrell about the treatment of his son aged 10 at Ryde School. The irate parent maintained that during the absence of a teacher [Miss McDougall was away with girls at a Swimming Carnival] two senior boys in charge caned his son over the back. His son had accidentally dropped a pen and while stooping over to retrieve it, he had been unjustly whacked. *Is this the norm?* asked Mr Birrell who, no doubt, to gain greater attention to his charge, had given his address as Victoria Barracks, despite the fact that he lived in West Ryde.

The Headmaster, Mr D. M. Pyke, asked to answer the charge, initiated his response with the statement that Ryde School was a happy place where boys were rarely caned. He was quite positive in his defence: *Birrell's report is petty, trivial and tinged with a certain amount of malice and jealousy. I have known the complainant for over 40 years since the time we were pupils in Wagga School, and when later I was a Pupil-Teacher and he still a pupil there. He evidently has a recall of times when corporal punishment was looked upon by many teachers as a necessary attribute. If Birrell had acted more manly, he should have interviewed me. There was no ill-treatment.*

*The cane was a pointer 14 inches long and from my investigation the Birrell boy was not hit at all. In fact, Birrell had thrown ink on a boy's coat and had hit boys on the head with readers, saying "That's how the guns go off at the war!" Two elder boys, William McKechnie and Stanley Grundy, the lads in charge at the time, state that Birrell was about to throw a pen at a boy and a threatening move was made by Grundy to prevent him from doing so. Birrell then told them the matter would be reported to me and commenced to weep and pretended to be hurt. The mental endowment of some parents has to be taken into consideration when rash, impulsive statements are made which are not substantiated. On being questioned, Alex Birrell has admitted in writing that he was not caned.*

Mr Birrell was duly informed by the Department that it was satisfied that his son had not be ill-treated, that, on the contrary, his lad had taken advantage of the temporary absence of a teacher to be disorderly and thereby deserving of punishment. He was further advised: It is customary to interview the Headmaster before seeking the intervention of the Department. Apparently his son, from fear or some other cause, had failed to make a full report to his father. The father was not satisfied. He loaded his guns and fired a further salvo. On January 17 1928 he wrote to say precisely that. He maintained that his boy was made to sign a statement of which he was ignorant and which was not true. *I desire to be informed of what further action you propose to take in connection with this case before having the matter brought before the Minister.* The man from Victoria Barracks had issued an ultimatum of war! The authorities proceeded post-haste with an inquiry. By this time Alex Birrell had left Ryde School and was enrolled at Meadowbank. He was sought out by Inspector Henry, and, when confronted, admitted he had signed the statements with full knowledge, that they were true and he also endorsed the statements made by fellow pupils in regard to the facts of the case. The complaint originally made by the boy to his father to screen himself from the possible consequences of his misconduct, and then by his belligerent father, had backfired. He had not reckoned on the many witnesses present, namely, George Curtis, Barry Deane, Tom Williamson, Stanley Taylor, Duncan Boyd, Sid Elliott, Neville Porter, Eddie Rogers and Geoff Wellings who all supported the evidence of his misbehaviour, not to mention Sid Zartmann and Leslie Howard on whose heads Birrell had thrown ink. Mr Pike commented further: *If the father is like the son, the former would say anything at all to cause excitement. A mountain has been made out of a molehill.* Another teacher, Mr McRae, also reported that Mr Birrell had earlier called upon him about a trivial matter and had approached him in an overbearing and very excited manner. He had threatened to go to the Department about his son who had been lightly punished for disobedience. The Department proceeded to inform Mr Birrell that no further action would be taken in the matter. Did Mr Birrell go to the Minister as he had threatened. No! He had emptied all his guns and had found no legitimate target.

If the reader is wondering what imposing rank Mr Birrell held at Victoria Barracks, he was — a postal messenger. Incidentally, Headmaster Pike, who seemed to have been the main target of Birrell's attack, lead a peaceful life, cultivating in his spare time a vegetable garden next to the teacher's residence. He used to keep not only a cow and a bull, but also a carpet snake. It was not uncommon then, especially in rural areas, to have such snakes in storerooms and outhouses in order to keep the rodent population at bay.

### THE UNKINDEST CUTS OF ALL

On January 30 1929, when the school enrolment was more than 700, an official complaint was submitted by Mrs E. G. Adamson of 14 Pope Street against the new Headmaster Mr Finlayson. She submitted that her son, Wallace, had received no fewer than 11 cuts of the cane on the one hand for no cause whatsoever, that the punishment made the boy's hand swell and further that the lad was detained for half an hour after school. She wrote: *I believe in a child being chastised, if he needs it, but where there is no cause, I do not hold with cruelty. I do not like complaining, but have been forced to do so.* The Headmaster admitted having punished Wallace. *He had been particularly troublesome during the day and for disobedience I gave him three slaps with the cane. When he returned to his seat, he behaved in an impertinent manner, shaking his head and talking to himself. I gave him two more and he repeated his impertinent behaviour. I gave him two more, and for a further repetition of his insolence I gave him two more. He then resumed his seat in an orderly manner. I dismissed the class and detained him for half an hour.*

At the Inspectorial inquiry the boy admitted that he had obeyed an order by Mr Finlayson and had voiced a threat to him that he would bring up his big brother, ostensibly to bash up the teacher, which was not an uncommon threat, mostly unheard by teachers. The boy said he was given 10 cuts, the mother said 11 and the teacher 9. There were so many that it was easy to lose count. The Inspector was inclined to the view that the boy's initial act was not one of wilful disobedience and that his subsequent conduct resulted from a feeling of injustice, that he had been punished for what, to him, was nothing at all. Mr Finlayson, on the other hand, complained of a very unsatisfactory tone of behaviour he found in the senior Classes since his recent advent to the school. It is not improbable that his sense of dissatisfaction in this respect had something to do with the punishment complained of. In other words he set out to clean up the conduct of all by setting the strongest example. Young Wallace was the meat on the chopping board for all to see.

The Inspector stated: *There is no doubt that the boy's conduct probably called for some corrective measures, but the ones used were quite unsuitable. One expects from a teacher of his experience and status more resourcefulness dealing with delinquent pupils that was manifested in this instance. Mr Finlayson is otherwise a wonderfully earnest and energetic teacher by no means lacking in the milk of human kindness.*

Unfortunately the teacher had gone over the top, emptying every bullet in his magazine, so to speak, and then not achieving the desired results. The lesson here for any teacher, leader or parent is that we can sometimes blow our top and regret our actions, that the basic rule of discipline is a small punishment for a small misdemeanour and that occasionally we might deliberately ignore or not see a tantrum or a reaction such as the one displayed by the lad. Finally, it does well to remember that an act of injustice, however slight, is the unkindest cut of all.

Mrs Adamson was informed that her son had been punished for disobedience and repeated acts of insolence, but steps had been taken which, it is believed, will obviate further cause for complaint in regard to corporal punishment administered to her son. The steps referred to was a rap on the knuckles for the Head who was told he had been lacking in resourcefulness in dealing with the case and should act more properly in the future.

#### **DING DONG DELL — THE END OF THE SCHOOL WELL**

In the early days of the school built on Pope's ridge there was a well for use in times of drought when the water tanks would be empty. In July 1929, long after water reticulation came to the school, it was decided that the well, being situated in the middle of the boys asphalted playground, was a source of potential danger to the pupils. Before it could be filled in and capped with concrete, several downpipes draining into it had to be diverted. The total cost was £42/10/-. Anyone to-day looking for the original well may have difficulty in locating it.

#### **HOSTILITIES OVER W. C. s: A TALE OF INTRIGUE**

In October 1930, when the Infants School was still attached to the Primary School on the ridge, Mrs L. Smith of 48 Shepherd Street complained to the authorities about the ill-treatment of her six-year-old son who came home in a disgusting state, allegedly because big boys would not allow him to use the lavatory at lunch-time. She stated that the child had been suffering from dysentery as the result of abscessed teeth. *How much longer, she lamented, are children to be tortured like this? Why should mothers be humiliated by their sons having to walk home through the streets of Ryde in a filthy condition.* Miss Ritchie, the Infants Mistress, duly replied to the Director-General. She stated that at the end of lunchtime on the day in question young Eric Smith, the last to lines, had told me that he had been prevented from going to the toilet. *The child's face, she reported was pale and drawn. He had to be sent home. It is true that the big boys interfere with the Infants in the lavatories.*

The Headmaster of the Primary School, Mr Ernest Cameron, was likewise consulted about the matter. Upon investigation he claimed that the big boys had not interfered with the boy in any way and that the lad was in this soiled state before he arrived at the lavatory.

Mr Cameron maintained that this was not the first time that such monstrous allegations had been made. His explanation was most significant: *It is well known that these complaints from mothers, well supported by Miss Ritchie, all have one object in view, namely to compel the Department to erect temporary closets expressly for the Infants. I have already said that these would be welcome, but, as this request has been refused [no doubt because of penny-pinching in the very depths of the economic depression], we try to make the best use of the conveniences. Some time ago the Infants Mothers Club, acting on information from Miss Ritchie, stated that there were only two seats for Infants, when there are ten. Never before in my school have the WCs been under such close supervision, the men teachers on duty walking there every few minutes. [Not a pleasant duty when the toilets were unsewered.] In my 40 years experience I have never heard of such complaints.*

Once again the authorities investigated to find a situation which demonstrated that all was not what it at first appeared to be. The Inspector reported on the patent disharmony between Mr Cameron and Miss Ritchie. *It is obvious that Miss Ritchie would be a law unto herself and cares little for the opinions of the headmaster or anyone else. The recently formed Mothers Club is unquestionably being used by Miss Ritchie to bend the Department to her will in connection with the request for additional lavatory accommodation and the fact that Mrs Smith should send the Department's reply to Miss Ritchie carries its meaning on the surface. It is clear that Miss Ritchie sees nothing wrong in playing the part of advocate for Mrs Smith against the headmaster of the school, though to a rightly constituted Headmistress the part could make but little appeal. She has often made written hysterical outbursts accusing boys of torture in dragging infants screaming with terror to men teachers with the threat of a sixer. Her reports are absurdly inaccurate.* The Inspector recommended that Miss Ritchie be informed that the Department considered the Headmaster's report to be correct and that no intimidation was resorted to in the questioning of the Smith child. This was done.

As a result Miss Ritchie realised she had been indirectly reprimanded. She had lost the strategic battle — at least for the moment, and so on December 12 1930 she wrote to the Inspector: *I have told the Secretary of the Mothers Club (Mrs Cairns of Bonnie Doon 56 Lane Cove Road) that she must not write any more letters to Members of Parliament, that the club was formed to work for the Infants and not to harass teachers. She is not responsible for nasty little paragraphs that have appeared in the newspapers.*

One example of publicity adverse to the department appeared in *The Sydney Evening News* of November 20 1930:

### ***CHILDREN'S MORALS MAY SUFFER: CONDITIONS AT RYDE SCHOOL***

*That lavatory accommodation is so crude that the children's morals are likely to suffer, was stated at the local Council meeting last night. It has been advised by the Education Department that no expense can be authorised at present for improvements, nor could the playing area be attended to. The Council decided to shame the Department by sending gravel to the school and fill in the dangerous parts of the grounds. The Council decided to protest to the Department once more. Miss Ritchie admitted she was wrong in accusing male teachers of intimidating the child Smith in questioning. She concluded: The Director has my assurance that hostilities have ceased. Should they break out again on the Left Wing, we are ready to disband at a moment's notice.*

All in all, this was an intriguing tale or perhaps rather a tale of intrigue

### **TALES OF THE DEPRESSION: SOME REFRESHING, MOST DEPRESSING**

During the Great Economic Depression, which began in 1929 and continued through for some ten years, a third of the male population was without work. For most inhabitants of Ryde, parents and children, the depression struck hard. The needs of the schools often went unanswered. The Department of Education was strictly limited in its expenditure. Requests for repairs and extensions often went unanswered, postponed for future budgets. The construction of a new and separate building for Infants at the southern end of the grounds was, however, realised in 1935 after many years of petitioning, overcrowding and squabbling. It had actually been approved in January 1929, but naturally delayed with the advent of the depression later in the year. The final cost was an imposing £7947 provided by Unemployed Relief Funds. There were always other minor costs for the Department such as the acquisition of a block of land in Argyle Avenue for £250 to allow easy access to the school; when break-ins occurred and when someone in need of good timber or firewood twice removed rails from the Wilson rail fencing at the school.

- On July 19 1932 two women from the Ryde Relief Movement called at the school to ask permission to dispose of bowls of soup to the pupils — a most worthy act, when the district was deep in the grips of the depression. The Headmaster, Mr Ernest Cameron, bound down by Departmental regulations, could not allow any distribution of food without the written consent of the authorities. Incredibly, in these days of the dole and destitution the Department at first hesitated, but finally agreed, *providing the women had no recourse to use any of the school buildings or interrupt the routine of the school in any way!* In September 1933 Nellie Thorpe of the Ryde Vigoro Club asked permission to use the school grounds for their sport, one of their few pleasures in life. The answer was a brusque No, similar to that given to a request in August 1929 from the Berger (Paints) Cricket Club for use of the school's concrete cricket pitch.



A cartoon from the *Bulletin*, Empire Day Lesson, May, 1932 with the following caption: *Now little boys and girls, I will tell you what the Empire is for. I borrow, say, twenty-five million pounds in England to build our noble city railway and Harbour Bridge. I promise to pay interest on the twenty-five million, but we don't actually send the interest to England; we send goods, wool, wheat and butter. The English buy the wool, wheat and butter, then I beat them for their interest and call them bloodsucking bondholders. Clever, isn't it? Always remember, dear boys and girls, that **Lang is Right**.* The Federal Government was forced to pay the interest owed to Britain and dismissed Lang from office.

- In March 1935 when the new Infants building was nearing completion and a double portable classroom at the old school would soon be unused, Mr A. Westman of the Ryde Young Citizens Association wrote to the Department requesting use of same. Since his organisation was engaged in trying to help young unemployed by offering instructional and recreational facilities (courses in radio, Book-keeping and Accountancy, Shorthand and Typing, Ticket-writing and Dressmaking), more space was needed than that offered by the School of Arts. It was proposed that for the good of the community the double classroom resided on the school grounds fronting Blaxland Road. The request was denied.

Though the authorities were never keen on allowing outside bodies access to the school grounds, they made one notable exception, namely, the annual Scout Rally. In May 1934 Frank M. Peach, local Real Estate Agent and President of the local Boy Scouts Association, contacted the local member of parliament, the Honorable E. S. Spooner to use his influence to help the local Scouts with accommodation. The troop, formed in 1924, had never had any headquarters of its own, but had been using the basement under the grandstand at Ryde Oval. Mr Spooner duly requested the removal of the aforementioned double portable classroom to part of an allotment opposite Ryde Park (Princes Street) which the Council would lease to the Scouts. The answer was no, but, oddly enough a second request through the M.P. one year later was successful.

REMEMBER THIS RHYME IN KINDERGARTEN?

*Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water.  
Jack came down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.  
Up Jack got and home did trot as fast as he could caper.  
He went to bed to mend his head with vinegar and brown paper.*

How many of us ever considered the cure so strange or just that paper rhymed with paper? In the days before aspirin headaches were treated in this way.

- In August 1935 teacher Miss Curwood asked for half a day's special leave to attend the Ryde Town Hall for the reception of Queen Salote of Tonga. Miss Curwood had been especially invited as she had become a fairly close acquaintance of the Queen during her three year teaching stint in charge of the Primary Department of Tubou College, Nukualofa, Tonga. She had not been a single day absent from Ryde School that year. Her headmaster supported her application. The leave was denied. Miss Ritchie, Mistress of the Infants Department, had also had many a knock-back of her requests to the Department, though she remained undaunted.

In 1934 she asked for special dispensation to admit to the school a child under the age of five years. It was a special case. The mother was dying of a lingering illness. No help for the child, aged 4 yrs 9 months, could be provided by the family, since it was poor. The sole bread-winner was an 18 year-old girl, currently in hospital suffering from appendicitis (a very serious problem in those days). The young child had a sister in the Girls Department of the School who cared for her before and after school. Mercifully the authorities consented to allow the girl to come to classes, provided that she was not officially enrolled until she had reached the legal age of five years. In August 1935 assistant teacher Henry Joachim suffered a most grievous loss when his son of 23 years died from illness in Ryde Hospital. Understandably he was away for more than just one day, four days in fact. He was granted one day's leave with pay, the rest without pay.

### JEST FOR YOUR INTEREST

Our teacher knew so many scientific terms that were unpronounceable. One day he went into the chemist's at Ryde and asked: *Can you give me a packet of monoacetic acidester salicylic acid please.* The knowing chemist replied: *Do you mean aspirins?* *That's it!* said the teacher, *I never can remember that name.*

- The high point for kids of the Depression was **MARKET DAY** at the school. Each year from 2 p.m. on a Friday in December near the end of the school year Market Day was held in the school grounds by the Parents and Citizens. Local produce, fruit and vegies, cakes and sweets etc were donated by good-hearted people and sold at attractive prices to those attending. The proceeds went to the school for the purchase of books and supplies.

One outstanding contributor was local philanthropist Gus Bowe, owner of the Rialto Theatre\*. On one occasion every child in the school lined up to receive from him a coin, albeit a copper one to the value of one penny, so that no child could not afford to buy an ice-cream. Psychologically such an event rated high with the children. Gus Bowe was renowned for his charity to needy families especially during the epidemic of Spanish Influenza in 1919 and during the Depression of the 1930s and also to sporting bodies, for sport was a most important counter to any depressing disposition in those hard times. Whenever the school was permitted to attend a matinee on a school day at the Rialto Theatre, it enjoyed receiving one third of the takings for school funds. On August 1 1931, for example, the pupils saw two documentary films, *Exploits of India* and Frank Buck in *Bring 'em Back Alive*. Another matinee on June 13 1932 when 472 pupils and 10 teachers saw *Siege of the South*, the return to the school was £3/18/8. In June 1935 77 girls and 54 boys went to the Rialto to view *Royal Cavalcade*. Built in 1931 for Gus and Jim Bowe the one storey theatre with 1480 seats was a daring enterprise in times of deep economic Depression. If the venture failed, the owners considered that it could be converted into a church. Though the theatre was in Spanish style with its sunken courtyard, fountains, arches, murals, medieval gargoyles and huge Spanish Cross on the ceiling, the name was rather Italian (from the famous bridge in Venice ex *Rivo Alto*, high bank).

The Rialto was also the name of a Sydney city theatre in the 1920s. The Spanish style derived from California (Spanish for hot oven!), originally a colony of Spain and the home of movies which had become the most sensational means of entertainment of the 20th century. The Sydney Plaza and Regent, the Parramatta Roxy and many dream palaces of the 1930s were based on the same Spanish theme.

Answer to Missing Letter Puzzle p. 52: Insert the letter E at the proper interval and make the inscription read:

PERSEVERE YE PERFECT MEN  
EVER KEEP THESE PRECEPTS TEN

### **TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED:**

In the 1935 the above sign appeared in quite a few places around the school boundaries as a result of years of complaints by Headmaster Albert Thomas Jarvis about misuse of the grounds by locals, especially neighbours dumping rubbish, including ironwork from the motor garage on the corner of Argyle Street and Blaxland Road. Neighbours with horses or cattle used to graze them on the grassy playground overnight and during the week-end. Back in early part of this century, for example, L. Tuckwell, caretaker of the Council Chambers, was reminded several times about not running stock in the grounds. Many people took a short cut through the school grounds. Access had been made easier in 1930 by the acquisition of a block of land fronting Argyle Avenue.

On the week-ends, larrikins would trample the garden beds or despoil the lavatories. On Mondays pupils would often sight contraceptives in the bushes. Quite a number of homes in Argyle Avenue whose properties backed on the school grounds had gates in the fence to permit easy access for their children and their fowls. It was a real problem all round. In 1935, following complaints by Headmaster Mr Ernest Cameron, the authorities had all these gates *permanently* barred over, but eventually they were unbarred. In 1936 access to the school from Argyle Avenue was facilitated by the acquisition of a block opposite the then rather new Infants block (occupied mid 1935).

### **MEADOWBANK BATHS — A HEALTH HAZARD**



Meadowbank Park incorporating the tidal baths in 1935. — Ryde Library.  
In the 1930s swimming in the Ryde Municipality was limited to tidal baths in the Parramatta River at Glades Bay, Regent Street and Meadowbank.

In November 1936 Mr J. Mitchell, the licensee of Meadowbank tidal baths on the Parramatta side of the railway bridge, officially complained to the authorities at both Ryde and West Ryde schools that their schoolchildren were not attending as they used to. The result was understandably a loss of revenue to him. Ryde Headmaster, John Neville, explained that his teachers considered attending the pool a complete waste of time, unless the tide was suitably high. Mr R. Gray, Headmaster of West Ryde School, went further to indicate that his pupils would no longer use the pool because of the water pollution caused by chemicals, coke and paints from the Mortlake gasworks, Bergers Paints etc. Most parents had forbidden their children (309 out of 406) to swim there because of the high incidence of ear, nose and throat problems. Local doctors and chemists agreed. This led to the demise of the Meadowbank Baths, to which children facetiously referred as Mudbank. Another reason was that the baths were not exactly shark-proof because of holes in the enclosure due to rotting timbers.

#### **SOME EVENTS OF 1937**

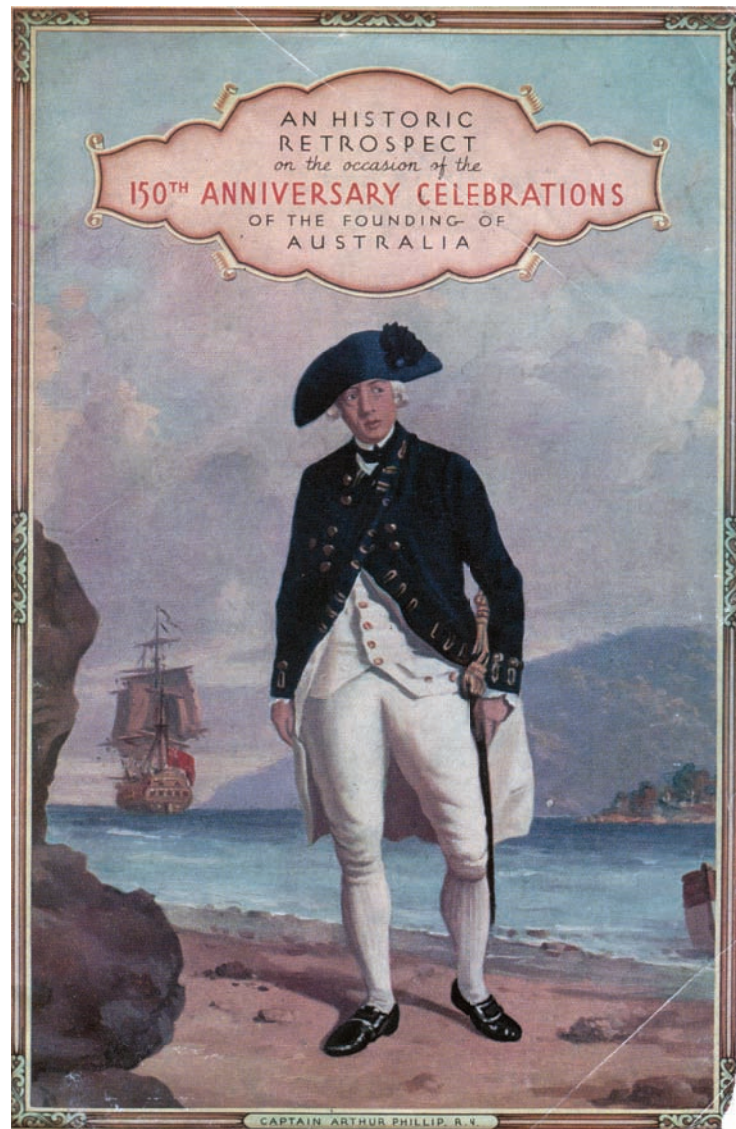
- \* In February 1937 after the long vacation it was discovered that thieves had stripped the lead flashing from the ridges of two sections of the building. Rain came in on several occasions. Repairs were effected six months later.
- \* On June 1937 290 boys attended the Ryde Rialto Theatre to see films provided by the Tea Marketing Board, also films on Adelaide, *Station Life in Queensland*, *Timber-getting in Queensland*, *Fishing in Tasmania*, *Ski-ing in America*.
- \* Regular use of the school was made by community groups: Boy Scouts and Cubs, Australian Air League for Instruction in Aviation and by the Parents and Citizens Association.

#### **PUSH FOR TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR RYDE**

As early as November 1926 a move had been made to establish a High School in Ryde. This came from outside of the district from the North Strathfield Progress Association which presented a very logical argument, that Ryde was central to growing areas north and south on the Strathfield-Hornsby train line. Figures of passengers to the various stations showed that in Ryde, Eastwood and Epping each saw the passage of over a million persons passed annually, with Ryde the highest. The authorities promised to consider the idea, but with the Great Economic Depression arriving in 1929, soon forgot it. From 1935 6th class boys attended manual training at Gladesville School just once a week.

In October 1936 T. A. Jones offered to sell 10 acres of land in Victoria Road opposite Moorong Home for Incurables as a site for a technical school. The offer was declined. In September 1937 the Ryde Council requested the State Government, in view of the district's increasing population, to establish a Technical School in Ryde on that section of the school grounds facing Blaxland Road.

In November of the same year Headmaster John Neville made out a further case: *We need a Junior Technical School here because Hornsby and Rozelle are too far away. Of 68 boys sitting for the Primary Final Examination this year 33 are opting for a technical school; last year 30 out of 69 made the same choice. All the schools within a three mile radius would be well served. Those travelling from populous centres on the Gladesville side would be travelling against the city-bound traffic; those from the northern side of Eastwood, Epping and Marsfield need not leave home until after the heavy traffic had passed. The area of the school here is 8 acres 3 roods and 21 perches with ample room for the technical school facing Blaxland Road.* The request was declined.



### **THE BIG CELEBRATION**

In 1938 to celebrate the Sesqui-Centenary of European settlement in Australia every schoolchild in the country was issued with a coloured pictorial magazine entitled *An Historic Retrospect on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the founding of Australia*. The history told in coloured pictures with copious explanations was a gem. The author still retains his copy.

In December 1940 at the annual presentation of prizes a representative of the Department of Education announced with a smile that, while no high school was being planned for Ryde, he could promise that a technical school was on the way. World War II lasting six years and with virtually no building in that time, the project evaporated. With eventual change in secondary education and the establishment of comprehensive High Schools the Tech School requested never came, unless in the form of the School for Catering Studies. If only those early advocates for secondary education in the Ryde area could have known that one day we would have several high schools and tertiary institutions including Macquarie University and The School for Horticulture.

In February 1938 the Department announced the establishment of Flute Bands under the supervision of Victor McMahon of the professional staff of the Conservatorium of Music. Ryde Head, Mr John Neville, nominated indefatigable teacher, Mr Stan Schmich, to be trained to become a proficient player in order that he could teach pupils in the art. In 1940 the school band consisted of nineteen flautists and two drummers. The band played for us to march generally and particularly in ceremonies such as Anzac Day.



In our classroom there was an impressive framed picture of the landing of the Anzacs at Gallipoli, Turkey, during World War I. To-day we continue to revere the bravery of the Aussie diggers and never question the great importance of this celebration, even though we recognise that the landing at Gallipoli was a mistake and that the campaign was a military failure with an horrific loss of lives.

## GROSS INJUSTICE TO INNOCENT CHILDREN

On February 7 1939 Mrs Lucy Toulmin wrote the following to the District Inspector: *I do not wish to make a complaint, just to seek information. In recent years there has been a lot in newspapers about child psychology used in schools. What I want to know, is this only for the lucky ones who can afford private schools, as our State schools seem to my mind to be sadly lacking. I have two children at Ryde Public School, and, not that I want to boast, for I have their reports to show that their conduct is always good and are no trouble to their teachers.*

*The first event occurred some months ago. My husband complained to the Headmaster at the time who said it would not occur again. I am just stating it. My boy aged nine is very nervy and hah never had the cane. The teacher was absent from the room; meanwhile the rowdy crowd made a noise. When the teacher returned, he had to find out who caused the trouble. When no-one would admit it, he caned the whole class. My young girl, aged seven, is always well behaved. Much the same happened to her. Instead of being caned the whole class was kept in — not a very serious punishment, but it hurt my child's feelings. [Injustice always hurts than any punishment, because it lingers much longer.] One hears so much about a child's deep-rooted sense of fair-play. Do you call that treatment fair-play?*

Inspector Campbell investigated and found that the first incident actually went back to the first week in February 1938. Boys in Mr Chamber's class were stamping along on the timber floor on their way to class. Chambers, having vainly asked for those responsible to own up, unwisely proceeded to cane every lad with one stroke. Mr Toulmin had complained to Headmaster, John Neville, and the matter was satisfactorily adjusted. Mr Neville informed Mr Chambers that he action was unwise and uncalled for and must never happen again. Mr Chambers was new to the school, in fact new to the Public School Service. Previously he had taught in a private school, Trinity Grammar, where, perhaps, things were different. He was interviewed by the Inspector and was reprimanded: *The Department takes a serious view of your grossly unfair action of February 1938 in punishing the whole class 4B for the offence of a few and you are warned against any repetition.* Mrs Toulmin was informed that the matter had been investigated and appropriate action taken against the teacher.

### CONNECTION WITH RYDE ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Empire Day 1939 was celebrated by the school in the Ryde Town Hall, where amid the songs and speeches a new flag to replace the one obtained from Ryde, England, was presented by a Returning Officer and unfurled in the presence of all including E. Spooner M. L. A., the Mayor and Aldermen. As earlier mentioned, the Isle of Wight was inhabited by the Danes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and means *clearing in the forest*.

**THINGS WERE GREAT IN 1938**  
**REMINISCENCES FROM AN EX-MALE PUPIL,**  
**NAMELY THE AUTHOR**

**A COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS**

*My first school, Drummoyne Public, was quite a military-minded school. P.T. (Physical Training or Physical Torture) consisted of army-like exercises and a fair bit of parade marching. Every morning during my stay there in 1937-1938 we saluted the flag and we marched into school swinging our arms, and once a week on Fridays after recess the whole of the "Big School" marched around the block to the tune of the flute and drum band. This we enjoyed immensely. My Dad had always been fond of Marching Music and as I grew up, I fancied it too. I still love it. You don't have to be a militarist to enjoy military bands and marches. Without really knowing why, my generation had been brought up at Primary School on slightly military lines.*

*All this was a hangover from the traditions of British military tradition, from being part of the then glorious British Empire. Every Monday morning at assembly the flag would be unfurled before all. At a given point we were asked to face the flag and repeat: 'I honour my God, I serve my King, I salute my flag.'*

**ORIGIN OF THE SALUTE:** Raising one's open right hand as a salute was originally a symbolic gesture to show that no weapon was being concealed. That is also the origin of shaking hands with the right hand. What then about left-handers, we may ask? That's why the Latin word for left is *sinister*.



Schoolgirls celebrating the very first Empire Day back in 1905.

*Cracker night on May 24 each year also helped us to think of the joys of Empire Day. The school also paraded their best scholars. After each term test, academic honours were awarded in the form of coloured ribbons to be worn daily on one's shirt or jumper. First in class wore blue; Second sported red and Third displayed yellow, not just once but everyday. When we moved to Ryde in May 1938, I was enrolled in Ryde School where things were decidedly different.*

*When my family moved to Ryde, we found that it was a much poorer area. They called Ryde Struggle Town, but there was no sign of hungry children nor haggard faces. In a traditional orchard area most people had fruit-trees (including stone fruit, especially loquats) in their backyards. Many had a few chooks and some kept a cow. A feature of life was co-operation whereby families with surpluses in fruit and vegies passed them on to their neighbours. If life was somewhat adverse, we children didn't realise it. Unlike adults we knew no comparisons. People seemed happy enough: they sang songs like Happy Days Are here Again and humour was alive. It is said that a little adversity is very good for the character. We had plenty in the era of Depression followed by six years of war times, but it didn't seem to do our generation any harm. I believe it made us stronger. We learned discipline and self-control and appreciation of the good years that were to follow.*

*Ryde School was a renaissance in my life. I loved it. The children seemed socially equal. No formal marching at this school; no ribbons for academic success, a big grassy playground (dubbed the paddock) instead of a confined area of asphalt. Ryde, 58 minutes from Circular Quay by tram, was certainly more rural with paddocks everywhere. It was then on the edge of Sydney. Between West Ryde and Parramatta it was all open land. Some of the kids had horses. I so enjoyed the school's casual rural atmosphere.*

*Life was incredibly free, the children being allowed out of school premises at lunch time, to walk up to the town via Tucker Street to buy lunch, or else to go to the little shop on the southern side of Pope Street just 20 metres or so from the school entrance. Lunch-time and recess were active periods, several games of cricket going on in summer and soccer balls being kicked in winter.*

*At Drummoyne School balls had not been allowed and playground games consisted mainly of Releasings, Saddle-me-nag, Stick-fly, Pussy-in-the-Corner etc. At Ryde there was a good cricket pitch down on the flat, but it was out of bounds for the "big school", being the playground for the Infants. Soccer depended on some pupil bringing his private ball to school. If the owner ever hotly disputed something during the game, he would gather up his possession and the game would be over. Cricket was fairly difficult on the sloping playground. The dirt pitch was hacked out, cut and fill style, leaving a clay bank on the high side. The wicket consisted of one square stone set on another. Very popular was the game of rounders. Someone would bring a pick-handle from home and that was used as the bat. The home base was near the top of the hill and the tennis ball would be hit downhill.*

*Marbles were played, especially around the roots of the big Morton Bay Fig Trees. Those old Fig Trees are still there to-day. One game called Poison with the first in "pug" became the venomous assailant, was new to me. Cards, bottle-tops and other playground games came in and out of fashion. In marbles we used to have connie agates (nice looking ones of swirled colours, clayeys (unattractive ones made out of clay) or commonos (just plain fairly unattractive ones) and bottle-os. The latter were also called glassies because they actually came from the inside of aerated waters or cordial bottles as they were known in country areas. They were clever devices to keep the gas in once the bottle had been opened. Another little pastime that created a bit of fun without costing anything was the blowing up by mouth of a paper bag, twisting it at one end to prevent the escape of air and bursting it suddenly with the hand or onto a table etc. Still another minor pursuit was to make a parachute out of a hankie by tying strings to each corner them joining them underneath with a light weight such as a small pebble. This would be hurled into the air and would then float down gradually to earth. In wet weather, the weather shed, being too limited in size for the whole school population, we were allowed in the classrooms where we would read or play boxes or noughts and crosses.*

### **BARE-FOOTED SCHOOLBOYS**

*When I lived in Drummoyne (up to May 1938), it was still Depression time, but every kid wore shoes to school. We had patches on our pants and darns in our socks, but we looked well-dressed, most of the boys wearing ties. At Ryde, in late Depression time, clothes were not elegant but adequate. I think most girls wore shoes. I can't be sure because it was a segregated school, the girls entering school via the wide gate in Pope Street and the boys through a smaller gate in Tucker Street. Nearly all the boys went bare-footed, unless it was very cold. So I too went bare-footed. I decided, I suppose, that I wanted to be on the same level as the rest. On Sports afternoon, Friday, many of us would wear sandshoes which cost then about 2/6 (25 cents). Of course, everyone walked to school, in fair weather or foul. Walking barefooted in the rush of rainwater in the street gutters was great fun.*

*After my two and a half years at the school, December 1940 that is, there came a prize-giving day at which I was to receive a medal and cup as Dux of the School. [Dux, by the way, is a Latin word meaning leader and was used in those days to name the top pupil in the school.] The medal and many other prizes were provided by the generous Gus Bowe, owner of the local Spanish-style picture show called the Rialto situated on the corner of Pope street and Blaxland Road opposite the tram terminus.*

*Incidentally, in 1940 I formed a cricket team, called the Ryde Rialtos, to play in the under-16 boys competition on Saturday mornings and, having asked Gus for a cricket bat to help us, he kindly obliged. On Presentation Day 1940 Mum rightly insisted that I should dress up for the award. That meant wearing shoes.*

*It went very much against the grain with me, but I compromised by going to school in the morning bare-footed and coming home for lunch, getting cleaned up and dressed, and putting on shoes for the afternoon.*

- Built in 1931 for Gus and Jim Bowe the one storey theatre with 1480 seats was a daring enterprise in times of deep economic Depression. If the venture failed, the owners considered that it could be converted into a church. Though the theatre was in Spanish style with its sunken courtyard, fountains, arches, murals, medieval gargoyles and huge Spanish Cross on the ceiling, the name Rialto was rather Italian (from the famous bridge in Venice ex *Rivo Alto*, high bank). The Rialto was also the name of a Sydney city theatre in the 1920s. The Spanish style derived from California (Spanish for hot oven!), originally a colony of Spain and the home of movies, which had become the most sensational means of entertainment of the 20th century. The Sydney Plaza and Regent, the Parramatta Roxy and many dream palaces of the 1930s were based on the same Spanish theme.

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1940 before the palms and the old grandstand at Ryde Oval members of the Ryde Rialto Hockey Team playing in the under 16 competition.

The competition was organised by Arthur Young and Alan Reece. All but one, the Captain, were boys from Ryde Public School. **Standing:** John Gillett, Robbie Brown, Alex McAndrew, Ken Ferguson, Billy Hopper, Alan Paterson; **Kneeling:** Fred Brown, Jack McAndrew (Captain), Don Bennell; **Sitting:** Bernie (Bugs) Odewahn, John Sinclair. The uniforms were magpie colours, black and white, Ryde's traditional sporting colours. The Rialtos were B Grade premiers that year, 91 goals for and 14 against.

## **FOOD — GLORIOUS FOOD! BUYING HOT MEAT PIES FOR A PENNY**

*Regularly on Mondays, we would have the privilege of receiving a whole threepence [two cents in to-day's currency] to spend on lunch. This happened on Mondays for two reasons. Firstly, it was traditionally washing day and therefore a heavy day for mothers, battling with fuel coppers and boiling clothes, wringing them out by hand or through a manually turned wringing device and hung out to dry on sagging horizontal wire lines pushed aloft by wooden clothes props (branches about eight to ten foot long with a small fork on the end). Seasonally, a man selling these for about 2/-, I think, would come along the streets singing out "Clothes props!" If we were about, we would time his cries and anticipate his next one by calling out: "What do you beat your wife with?" The street vendor would inevitably supply the answer and we would have a good chuckle. The second reason for Monday lunch up the town, was that bread (the basis for our regular sandwich lunches) was delivered daily Mondays to Fridays by the Bake-o. That meant that Friday's bread was quite stale by Monday. These days, of course, bread has been made to last far longer and can be conveniently kept frozen in refrigerators or freezers, which were non-existent for the overwhelming majority of people, even in the 1940s. Incidentally people then ate predominantly white bread.*

*On Mondays, then, bare-footed boys would trot eagerly into Arthur Booth's famous Gum Leaf Cake shop (attended by four or five young women shop assistants) and buy a hot meat pie or a pastie for a penny (one cent) and or a cake for the same price. Once the teacher asked me to bring back a pie for him. When the salesgirl knew it was for the teacher, she charged me threepence. That meant that the pies were generously discounted by Mr Booth just for the kids, which I think was a great thing during the Depression.*

**WHY IS THE HUMBLE MEAT PIE SO CALLED?** The name is said to have come from the common bird, the magpie, which collects all sorts of things including feathers, bottle tops and shiny objects. Home-made pies were likewise a mixture of ingredients, leftovers put together by the wife. The husband is said to have compared the dish with a magpie's nest. In time the magpie was reduced to the pie. The French word for magpie is *pie*.

*Schoolmate Horrie Davis (born 1928) believes there was another factor in this low price, namely, that the Andy Craig's fish shop on the corner of Church Street opposite the Post Office used to offer the children a penn'orth of chips. Also at the tuckshop close to the school in Pope Street you could get a salad roll for a penny and an iced block also for a penny. Eating our cherished pie as we walked along, we would cross Devlin Street to go Hampson's Ham and Beef shop (now called a delicatessen), which was in Parkes Street (between Stan Wilson's Bike and Sporting Goods shop and Harris Bros Produce store) opposite the Masonic Temple. There we could have a beautiful freshly-made ham roll also for a penny.*

**ORIGIN OF THE HUMBLE BREAD ROLL:** The word *roll* in this sense comes from the Latin word *rota* meaning a wheel. Similarly, there is a *roll* of paper, a *roll* of drums and even the *role* of an actor, where the lines spoken have been learned from a *roll* of paper.

*If we hadn't bought a cake we would use the remaining penny to buy an ice cream or iced block. What did we drink? Water from the bubbler. Sometimes, on a hot summer's day, while walking home from school, one of the boys might go into someone's front garden and get a drink of water from the tap. The rest of the boys would then call out: Hey, Missus! There's a pig in your yard! These Monday lunches were yummy and one of the few times we were given money to spend. With envious eyes, we would pass Hayward's Milk Bar in Blaxland Road (sited on the corner of what is now the arcade into the Ryde Regional Shopping Centre first established by the firm of Benjamin's) as more affluent adults were quaffing down milk shakes at fourpence each or fivepence for malted milks. Pinching fruit by legging over someone's backyard was not unknown. Some kids would go into the fruit shop and ask for specks, that is' pieces which were damaged or slightly bad.*

*To-day, if we buy a bag of fruit, we might be paying for a speck or two. At the grocery you could always try for a penn'orth of broken biscuits, the biscuits then coming in large tins and a certain amount being weighed out in a paper bag according to the client's needs. The customer would complain if broken ones were included. Incidentally the grocer's timber floor, like that of the butcher, was generally covered with sawdust, which was neatly raked before the business opened. Sliding along on the sawdust added speed to the salesman's service, which was otherwise slow. People got their groceries about once a week and with every major order came a bonus for the children in the form of a bag of boiled lollies. There was a ribbon of shops from the corner of Devlin Street to the corner of Tucker Street. All the land behind the shops right up to the Rialto Theatre on the corner of Pope and Devlin Streets was completely vacant. Just as well it was available for Benjamins to create the very first Regional Shopping Centre in this State. Horse-owners would often graze their mounts there. Nearly all the land west, down from the Tram (now Bus) Terminus, as far as Melville Street was open paddocks or market gardens, both Chinese and Australian. This later provided sites for the present School of Horticulture and the College of Catering Studies. There were still quite a few unsealed streets. Princes Street south of Victoria Road, for example, was only a track for pedestrians and cyclists. The paddocks there were a great source of mushrooms after rain. After school at home we would get a round of bread and jam to eat. Mostly plum or apricot and never strawberry which cost 80% more. When we went out on the street or to a paddock to play, carrying this round of bread and jam, kids were in the habit of asking, "Have you got a sore hand?" No doubt this expression sprang from red-coloured jam on white bread representing bleeding through a white bandage.*

## **POCKET-MONEY**

*There were no expenses to attend school, that is no school fees. Every year the Gould League of Bird Lovers offered for sale membership on a card, which cost a penny, or a metal lapel badge which cost a shilling. I managed to buy a penny card by returning an empty soft drink bottle to the shop. There was no such thing as pocket money for us in those days, though our parents did answer our needs for buying lunch or our fare for a Saturday arvo at the flicks plus something to spend at interval. Shirley Temple movies were still popular, but the current cowboy films with Gene Autry we found very tame. We went to the flicks or the pictures, not the movies. The weekly serials such as Secret Agent X-9 and Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe were exciting for us kids. Unforgettable films for me were the Great Waltz and the Four Feathers. We would earn a little money selling newspapers after school. Early in 1938 they cost a penny halfpenny, but that year the price rose to twopence. We would walk the streets, selling rather few and earning a commission of 2/6 in the pound, twelve and a half per cent. That amounted to about 1/3 per week for me; on Saturdays we would sometimes work in the market gardens off Parkes Street (to-day's School of Horticulture) for 2/6 a day or 1/3 half day; in the holidays we would sell old newspapers to Madden's butchery for twopence a pound and gather empty drink bottles (which were rare) to recoup a penny for large soft drink containers but only twopence a dozen for beer bottles.*

## **OUR TEACHERS**

*The Headmaster was John Neville (nicknamed Nibs, in service since 1907) who lived in the two-storey teacher's residence on the north-east side of the school buildings, that space now occupied by classrooms. In my time he generally took 6B and was frequently called to his office for phone business, interviews etc. At that time there was no clerical assistance. Affable Mr Ivan Scott, who always took assembly, was First Assistant. He used to use his whistle like pipes and drum to march us into school. When I was in his class in 1938, we were asked to write a composition about our favourite wireless (radio) programme. Most of us wrote about the serial, now historical, "Yes, What?" with teacher Doctor Pym and his pupils, Bottomley, Stanford and Greenbottle.*

*Miss Lizzie Gwendoline Curwood was the only female teacher and always took Third Class. She was connected with the island of Tonga where she had taught for three years. Starting in the service in 1916, she had taught in many country schools and in Putney in 1926, before she came to Ryde. A man who took 4th class in my time was Alfred Chambers who, in 1937, at the age of 39, switched from teaching at Private School (Trinity Grammar) to the State service and was appointed to Ryde. At a time when visual aids consisted of largish still pictures provided by the Pictorial Gazette, Mr Chambers made a deep impression on me by showing a filmstrip on flies. I learned for the first time where flies go in wintertime. Goodness knows, with lots of cowpats and horse manure around, there were flies galore in those days.*

*Mr Colin Harrison, who began teaching in 1928, was a very popular teacher and sportsmaster. The main sports he administered were soccer and cricket. In the 1930s Don Bradman, Stan McCabe, Bill O'Reilly and Alan Kippax were our heroes. Their creed of sportsmanship was simple: the game comes first; the match second; and yourself last, no matter what talent you had. Colin Harrison, by the way, went on to become an Inspector. I came across him many years later when I was a teacher and found him one of the most sensible and humane persons I had ever met. Ryde was extremely lucky to have had him.*

*Mr William Doughton, who was well on in years, having started in the service in 1897, no doubt as a Pupil-Teacher, specialised in teaching gardening, poetry and singing to the lesser gifted pupils. Mr Doughton was a member of the Teachers' Horticultural Society and proudly presented entries from Ryde School in Garden Exhibitions in the Sydney Town Hall. Another teacher was Mr Leonard G. Bowman who wouldn't stand for any nonsense. Mid-1939 a man named John Graham came out of retirement to teach at the school. In teacher's jargon he was known as a "retread".*

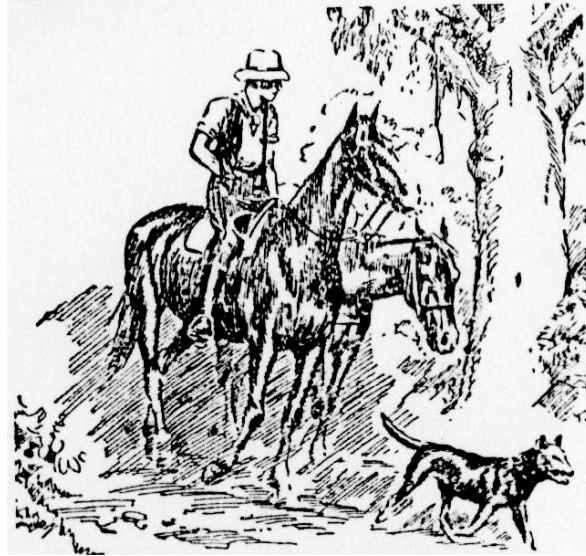
**GARDENING IN SCHOOLS:** Was first started in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, in 1819 and soon spread to schools throughout Europe.

*My teacher in 1939 and 1940 was Mr Stan Schmich, who was a wonderful, dedicated teacher. I well remember a poem in the School Magazine, September 1, 1939, which he introduced to us, all so deeply affected by the outcome:*

#### **THE BALLAD OF THE DROVER**

*Across the stony ridges,  
Across the rolling plain,  
Young Harry Dale, the drover,  
Comes riding home again.  
And well his stock-horse bears him,  
And light of heart is he,  
And stoutly his old packhorse  
Is trotting at his knee.*

*Up Queensland way with cattle  
He's travelled regions vast.  
And many months have vanished  
Since home-folk saw him last.  
He hums a song of someone  
He hopes to marry soon;  
And hobble-chains and camp-ware  
Keep jingling to the tune.*



*Round the hazy dado,  
Against the lower skies  
And yon blue line of ranges  
The station homestead lies.  
And thitherward the drover  
Jogs through the lazy noon,  
While hobble-chains and camp-ware  
Are jingling to a tune.  
An hour has filled the heavens  
With storm-clouds inky black;  
At times the lightning trickles  
Around the drover's track;  
But Harry pushes onward,  
His horses' strength he tries,  
In hope to reach the river  
Before the flood shall rise.  
The thunder pealing o'er him,  
Goes rumbling down the plain;  
And sweet on thirsty pastures  
Beats fast the plashing rain;  
Then every creek and gully  
Sends forth its tribute flood —  
The river runs a banker,  
All stained with yellow mud.*

*Now Harry speaks to Rover,  
The best dog on the plains,  
And to his hardy horses,  
And strokes their shaggy manes;*

*“We’ve breasted bigger rivers  
When floods were at their height,  
Nor shall this gutter stop us  
From getting home to-night!*

*The thunder growls a warning,  
The blue, forked lightnings gleam;  
The drover turns his horses  
To swim the fatal stream.  
But oh! the flood runs stronger  
Than e’er it rained before;  
The saddle-horse is failing,  
And only halfway o’er!*

*When flashes next the lightning,  
The flood’s grey beast is blank;  
A cattle-dog and packhorse  
Are struggling up the bank.  
But in the lonely homestead  
The girl shall wait in vain —  
He’ll never pass the stations  
In charge of stock again.*

*The faithful dog a moment  
Lies panting on the bank,  
Then plunges through the current  
To where his master sank.  
And round and round in circles  
He fights with failing strength;  
Till, gripped by wilder waters,  
He fails and sinks at length.  
Across the flooded lowlands  
And slopes of sodden loam  
The packhorse struggles bravely  
To take dumb tidings home;  
And mud-stained, wet, and weary,  
He goes by rock and tree,  
With clanging chains and tinware  
All sounding eerily.*

### **HENRY LAWSON**

*In 1940 it was the selfless Stan Schmich who formed a school flute and drum band  
and instructed the boys every morning before lessons.*

*Once the band got going, we did march into school to the tune of a suitable song called Marching into School:*

*NOW WE STAND IN LINE AND WE MARCH IN TIME  
TO THE TUNE OF DRUMS AND FLUTES.  
AS WE SWING ALONG, WE WILL SING THIS SONG  
TO THE TOOT-TOOT-TOOTLE OF THE FLUTE.  
NOW IT'S LEFT RIGHT LEFT IN A MANNER BRIGHT AND GAY  
AS WE GO TO WORK OR PLAY  
SO WE SING THIS SONG AS WE STRIDE ALONG  
WHEN MARCHING INTO SCHOOL.*

*Another song I remember we sang on Arbor Day, in the best traditions of the tree-planting day inaugurated by our school back in 1890. The words were set to the tune of MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA. The chorus ran:*

*HURRAH! HURRAH! WE'RE GOING TO PLANT A TREE!  
HURRAH! HURRAH! MAYBE TWO OR THREE  
FOR, WHEN WE ARE DEAD AND GONE,  
THEY'LL STILL BE GROWING ON  
TO SHOW THAT WE WERE GOOD AUSTRALIANS.*

*Mr Schmich used to ride a pushbike (with two handbrakes and back pedal brake) to school from West Ryde and carried with him a Gladstone bag, then very popular with workers. With a German name like Schmich he must have suffered some embarrassment from the time World War II began. Some of the kids cruelly referred to him as German Jack. One day a boy in my class asked him: "Are you German, Sir?" He proceeded with emotion to lecture the lad with all of us listening intently, saying that for the mere sum of two shillings and sixpence he could change his name by Deed Poll. It was probably a good thing this incident happened because no-one ever mentioned the German factor again. His first name was Stanislaus and he might have been of Polish parents or at least of one.*

*Though pupils never knew it, a teacher could appear to be angry or even enraged without actually being so. Acting ability is a great aid to gaining attention and instilling discipline.*

*When a teacher dramatically rips out a page of sloppy work from an individual's exercise book, it makes a great impression on all present and a wish on the part of others not to be in the same shoes as the victim. As the great French thinker, Voltaire, once stated when asked about the execution of English Admiral Byng in 1757 for what seemed a not very unpatriotic tactic in not going into battle, it was ***pour encourager les autres***, that is, to encourage others not to do the wrong thing.*

**FROM A PUPIL'S COMPOSITION BOOK IN 1937: A workman at the Ryde Brickworks fell down the cliff and died of infernal injuries.**

### **WALTZING MATILDA**

*Like most kids in Primary School we learned with pleasure the full text of Australia's most popular song, "Waltzing Matilda". Perhaps, because of his German name, Mr Stan Schmich was able to provide us, like no other, with an insight into the real origin of the song. He told us that Andrew Paterson, author of the poem, recognized that the theme, Matilda, the affectionate female name for the swagman's bundle of possessions, is thought to have come from the German female name, "Matilde", a term of endearment bestowed by Austrian soldiers on their indispensable greatcoat, their constant companion, that they rolled in cylindrical fashion when they were on the move in climes far cooler than in Australia. In 1856 the largest white non-British minority in Australia were German. "Wandern", hiking, is a national pastime in Germany to-day. A former term for hiking in Germany was "walzen" meaning to waltz, hence the term "Walzbruder"/literally waltz brother, a lover of hiking around the countryside. The terms swag and tucker are also informal words that would be hard to find in any poetry of the day.*

*Mr Schmich taught us the meaning of Aboriginal words in the text: coolibah/a species of eucalyptus tree; billabong/dead water (bong meaning dead also connects to our word bung, something that won't work such as a bung watch). The word billy is likewise a container for water; jumbuck is a sheep. He indicated the reason for the song's popularity. Despite the swagman's having stolen a sheep, we feel sympathy for him and not for the rich farmer. Swagman originally means a thief, his booty being the swag. The very word squatter for farmer literally means a person who squats on unoccupied land without legal claim. Traditionally, because our early population of convicts and convict origin far outnumbered the gentry and free settlers, troopers or policemen have never been very popular in Australia.*

*Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong  
Under the shade of a coolibah tree  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
"You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.  
Waltzing, Matilda, waltzing Matilda,  
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.  
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled,  
"You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."*

*Down came a jumbuck to drink at that billabong.  
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee.  
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tuckerbag.*

*Waltzing, Matilda, waltzing Matilda,  
 You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.  
 And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tuckerbag.  
 "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."  
 Up rode a squatter mounted on his thoroughbred;  
 Down came the troopers — one, two, three.  
 Whose is that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tuckerbag?  
 "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me!"  
 Waltzing, Matilda, waltzing Matilda,  
 Whose is that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tuckerbag?  
 "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me!"*

*Up jumped the swagman; sprang into the billabong;  
 "You'll never catch me alive!" said he.  
 And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong:  
 "You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me:"*

*Most songs and poems we learned at school linger long in our memories. One such poem was:*

***THE PIONEERS*** by Frank Hudson

*We are the old world people; ours were the hearts to dare;  
 But our youth is spent and our backs are bent,  
 And the snow is in our hair.*

*Back in the early fifties, dim through the mist of years,  
 By a bush-grown strand in a wild strange land  
 We entered — the Pioneers.*

*Our axes rang in the woodlands where the gaudy birds flew  
 And we turned the loam of our new-found home  
 Where the eucalyptus grew.*

*Housed in a rough log shanty, camped in a the leaking tent,  
 From sea to view of the mountains blue,  
 Where the eager diggers went.*

*We wrought with a will unceasing we moulded and fashioned and planned.  
 We struggled with Mother Nature and blazed the trails  
 Across this hard tough land.*

*Take now the fruit of our labour, nourish and guard it with care;  
 For our youth is spent and our backs are bent  
 And the snow is in our hair.*

## BOOK TITLES

*The Theory of Life* by Eva Lution.  
*The Girl with Personality* by L. N. Aura

## ORIGIN OF SOME WORDS:

*Pen* comes from the Latin *penna* meaning a feather. Early writing pens were sharpened feathers. Paper comes from the reed *papyrus*. Book is from Anglo-Saxon *boc*/beech tree on which words were scratched; while alphabet is from the Greek *alpha* and *beta*, meaning *a* and *b*. The letter *m* derives from a drawing representing a wave in the sea. A *neighbour* literally means a near farmer.

*Very popular with all the boys was a poem by Sir Henry Newbolt. Its Latin title, Vitai Lampada, we just accepted as the Torch of Life. The first stanza appealed to us because it was about cricket. The second stanza took us to the war in Sudan and the third again bore the message: Play up! Play up! And play the game!*

*There's a breathless hush in the close to-night —  
Ten to make and a match to win —  
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,  
An hour to play and the last man in.  
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,  
Nor the selfish hope of a season's fame,  
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote —  
'Play up! Play up! And play the game.'*

*The sand of the desert is sodden red,  
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;  
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,  
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.  
The river of death has brimmed its banks,  
And England's far and Honour a name,  
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:  
'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'*

*This is the word that year by year,  
While in her place the School is set,  
Every one of her sons must hear,  
And none that hears it dares forget.  
This they all with a joyful mind  
Bear through like a torch in flame,  
And falling fling to the host behind —  
'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'*

*Another favorite of ours was Click Goes the Shears.*

Did you hear about the poor swaggie during the Great Economic Depression who was charged with stealing a bottle of perfume from the chemist's shop. He was convicted of *fragrancy*.

*Pupils' memories of school vary considerably. There were those who were so glad to leave the institution, whilst others look back nostalgically with appreciation of school and mateship there, as I do, and have even set my thoughts to lyrics:*

### **School Days**

*Let us dream once more of our days at school  
Visions of toil sweat and pleasure.  
Let us dream again of those salad days;  
These are the days that we treasure*

*Think of the joys in the truths that we found;  
Think of the friendships that ever abound.  
Turn back the years 'mid thoughtful tears;  
Relish the laurels with which we were crowned.*

### **THE VALUE OF LEARNING FIRST AID**

*One thing I learned at school which proved to be a life-saver was First Aid. I will always be grateful to Mr Schmich for his instruction. One Sunday in the winter of 1940 while several of our mates were playing on an open paddock a local boy got angry, pulled a knife on my brother and stabbed him in the wrist. As blood literally spurted into the air from a pierced artery, I instantaneously rushed forward and arrested the bleeding with my hands, just as our good teacher had taught me to do, until professional help could be had. Others, including my loving brother, have since related this story to me, yet I do not thereafter remember doing such a thing. When deep emotions are involved, the brain can protect us from recalling awful moments we do not wish to recall.*

### **ROMANCE AT PRIMARY SCHOOL?**

*Mr Schmich drew a lot of attention, when, on Playground Duty, he would talk with Miss Biddy Haynes over the Wilson rail fence dividing the boys and the girls playground. The boys naively construed from this that there was a great romantic connexion between the two. Perhaps it was not so naive, because Horrie Davis (born 1928) who was in my class, informs that his older sister, Norma, used to act as courier for notes sent by Miss Haynes to Mr Schmich. Many years later a contemporary ex-female pupil related to me this most unsympathetic chant:*

*Biddy Haynes has no brains; all she does is canes and canes.  
She goes to church on Sundays  
And prays to God to give her strength to cane the kids on Mondays.*

*The question is: were these official school communications or billets doux? Biddy was not Miss Haynes' real name; it was Ethelreda. She was born in Durham, England, in 1883 and started teaching in Australia in 1913, so in 1940 she was near retiring age. It was obvious that she wore a blondish wig. The only time I was ever in the girls' sacred area was when Mrs Haynes herself asked me to conduct the Boys' Band for some end-of year open-air concerts. No doubt my teacher Mr Schmich had recommended me. It was on these occasions that I first made contact with girls, one in particular, whom I partnered in dances to the accompaniment of records on the wind-up gramophone. It was a short but very pleasant association. Otherwise, it was a case of the boys chasing balls, not chasing girls.*

**The Latest Wonder!**

— THE —

**“ Penny - In - the - Slot ”**  
**Gram-o-phone.**

The Horn, Sound Box, Travelling Arm, and Disc are JUST AS ACCESSIBLE as in the ordinary well known type of Motor, and any one desirous of adjusting the machine or CHANGING THE DISC before starting it, may do so with perfect ease. Before the winding mechanism can be released, it is necessary to put a penny in the slot provided for the purpose, when the machine may be wound and started, after which it will run for ONE TUNE ONLY, and then automatically lock itself. The person using the machine may then change the needle and regulate the record at will, and on playing a **SECOND** penny in the slot the machine may be rewound. This operation may be repeated any number of times.

I need hardly point out the great advantages of an automatic machine in which the RECORDS or TUNES can be FREELY CHANGED with absolutely NO TROUBLE or SUPERVISION.

**PRICE:**

**£12 12s**



**A. P. SYKES,**  
MUSIC WAREHOUSE,  
227 Little Collins Street, MELBOURNE.

The wearing capacity of a good penny in the slot device is so well known that I need hardly say anything on this head. That the Automatic Gram-o-phone will prove a remunerative source of income I have not the slightest doubt, and from the startling variety of the records which can be supplied, and their absolute novelty, it comes up a field which no other Automatic Musical Device can in any way rival.

*Orders will be executed strictly in rotation  
as received.*

*The gramophone was our only form of recorded music in those days. These non-powered machines had to be wound up by hand and the Bakelite round record would play for just two or three minutes. There were two types of needles, one of steel which had to be re-placed after a dozen or so playings, the other was of bamboo producing a much softer sound and which lasted much longer. The school records were mainly used for dancing, though sometimes we marched to the tune of the Stein Song.*

*When war came in September 1939, there were all sorts of activities arranged to raise money for the War Effort. These included school concerts held in the Town Hall, which was then situated on the corner of Blaxland Road and Tucker Street west of the Infants front playground. How delighted we were to sing British patriotic songs such as Rule Britannia, Soldiers of the Queen, Men of Harlech, Hearts of Oak, Sons of the Sea ... A memorable act, in which I took part with others, was the Gendarmes' Chorus by Gilbert and Sullivan and we enjoyed little skits written by the Headmaster, John Neville, and performed by the pupils.*

*If gentlemen should make a riot and punch each others' fists at night,  
We're quite disposed to keep it qui-et, as long as that they make it right;  
But, if they do not seem to see, or give to us our proper terms,  
We'll run them in, we'll run them in, we'll run them in, we'll run them in,  
We'll show them we're the bold gendarmes;  
We'll run them in, we'll run them in, we'll run them in;  
We'll run them in. We'll show them we're the bold gendarmes.*

*The Pacific War was far away then and we were not affected by it until the end of 1941, when we were already at secondary schools.*

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

*It was a great privilege to be asked to go and ring the school bell. It had no rope or chain. The bell-ringer would take a long piece of electrical conduit from behind the door and place the right-angle bend at one end of it over the bar of the wheel controlling the bell. School began at 9:30 and finished at 3:30. During lunchtime which began at 12:30 there were three bells, the first halfway through, at 1 o'clock, the second five minutes before the final bell when everyone was expected to be in lines. When the second bell sounded, all play finished in the paddock as we called it. Most of us were well down the hill and we would say "It's all up!" and immediately run uphill from the paddock to go to the lavatory (the dunny) and wash our hands and feet in the washing troughs. There was no sewer laid on in those days. Going to the lavatory was no pleasant experience. Official records show that in my time an Inspectorial Report spoke of plans for the installation of sewerage in the school.*

*Scripture lessons were held regularly for half an hour or so on Friday mornings, each child being assigned to his particular faith. It was then that I learned a big word, non-denominational. Those in that category were minded in a special room. I remember in 1939, when an aeroplane came over the school — a rare occurrence — we were allowed to stop work and look out the window.*

*Behaviour was generally good, for the basic reason that pupils had to do as they were told or suffer the cane. I consider that no-one was ever punished without just cause.*



*We didn't know anything then about a Punishment Book into which all incidents of caning had to be entered. I don't believe one or two strokes were ever entered, only severe punishment of four or six strokes, which were meted out for gross disobedience or theft. I can't ever remember any severe punishment in my time. One of the lads, Billy Hopper, used to make us laugh, by keeping at the back of his exercise-book a running account of the number of strokes of the cane. When he copped a couple himself, he would return to his seat and with a smile proceed to add his two to the score. We all accepted such punishments as deserved.*

*Ryde was then considered a fairly tough neighbourhood, having the dubious honour of the presence of a gang of larrikin teenagers known as the Forty Thieves \*. These louts often frequented the tram terminus and were well-known to the police, but our fear of them was perhaps more imagined than real. I believe these bird-brain delinquents who stole, destroyed public property and scaled on the trams at night, spent most of their time by day standing around smoking and trying to look tough and anti-social in public. Legging off the tram backwards was for them their greatest achievement. I met one of them in 1944 during the Pacific War. He had come home to Ryde after having been fighting against the Japanese in the jungles of New Guinea. He was a much more sober and wiser person.*

\* It is of historical interest to note that at a time when the white population of the Colony did not extend more than a distance of 50 miles of Sydney, there were a number of men called the Forty Thieves (the Forties). They were involved in illicit distilling and in smuggling. Unlike the larrikins of Ryde, they were gentlemen to all appearances who became rich supplying grog shops, some attaining high positions. At the time of the Great Economic Depression in the 1930s it was often considered no great crime to rob the government of its revenue.

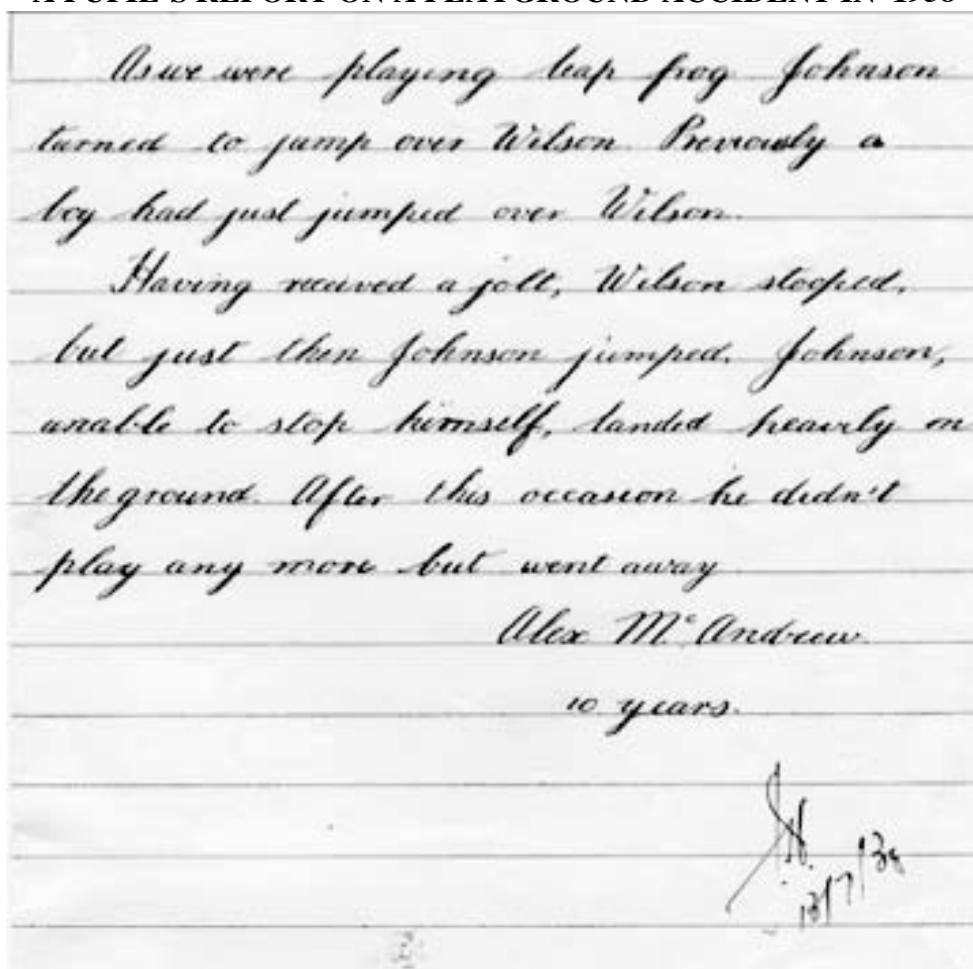


In the author's day a few pupils rode a horse to school.

## SCHOOL ACCIDENTS

*There was always the odd accident in the playground, especially in windy weather, when kids seem to go crazy. I recall accidents, such as Alf Evans being hit by a cricket ball bowled by Ken Tyerman and struck to leg by Frank Hardy; boys injuring themselves falling over the python-like roots of the Morton Bay Fig-trees. One day in July 1939 schoolmate Mervyn Johnson injured his head playing leap-frog with other boys. Belonging to a small staff, all teachers except the Headmaster were on playground duty nearly every day, before school, at recess or lunch. They had to write an accident report as did any pupil witnesses. In those days with pen and nib we wrote in what was known as copperplate style — light upstroke and heavy downstroke. This style disappeared with the advent of the ball point pen invented by a Hungarian named Biro [actually pronounced beero in Hungarian].*

### A PUPIL'S REPORT ON A PLAYGROUND ACCIDENT IN 1938



*As we were playing leap frog Johnson turned to jump over Wilson. Previously a boy had just jumped over Wilson.*

*Having received a jolt, Wilson stopped, but just then Johnson jumped. Johnson, unable to stop himself, landed heavily on the ground. After this occasion he didn't play any more but went away.*

*Alex M. Andrew.*

*10 years.*

*13/7/39*

*It was like a birthday present, when many decades after I had left Ryde School, I found, in the School Files of 1939, my own report of the leap-frog incident. Leap frog was a popular game where a line of boys bent right over grasping one ankle with both hands to provide a sturdy hurdle for each one in turn to leap. It could go on continuously, but normally was of short duration, the participants soon becoming tired of it, and turning to something else.*

**THE BEST DISCIPLINE IS SELF-DISCIPLINE:** *Self-discipline depends on one's ability to think for oneself, a rare quality with young people, even with many adults, the majority of whom tend to follow the crowd. I learned a good lesson in self-discipline fairly early from my father's simple advice "If your mate wants to put his head in the fire, will you?"*

*At the end of 1940 some of us sixth class pupils sat for the Primary Final Examination (formerly the Q.C. or Qualifying Certificate), which was only compulsory for those seeking a placement in High School. Two of us succeeded in gaining a place to High School and from 1941 travelled daily to Fort Street, Petersham, by train from West Ryde Station [then known just as Ryde station].*

*At the time there were only a few High Schools for boys (Sydney High, Sydney Technical High, North Sydney High, Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield, but originally at Hurlstone Park, [hence the retention of the name Hurlstone], a few miles south of Liverpool and one Co-ed at Parramatta). Other pupils went on to Drummoyne Intermediate High, to Rozelle Junior Tech or Hornsby Junior Tech, while girls went to Fort Street or Hornsby Girls High, Riverside Domestic Science or William Street in Sydney.*

**Sign on watchmaker's door in Church Street: On vacation. Unwinding**

#### **PRIDE IN THE SCHOOL AT RYDE**

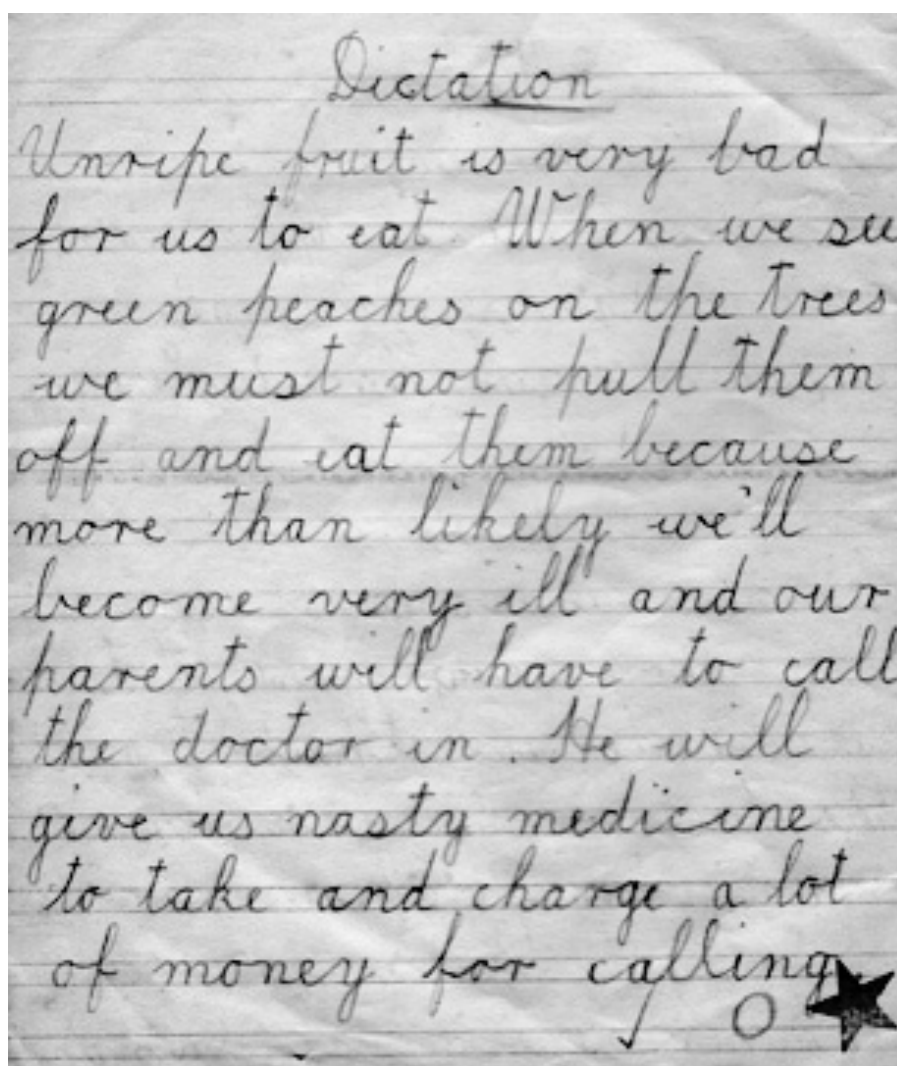
*I loved my time at Ryde School. I remember even going there during the Christmas holidays and playing with the nephew of the Headmaster who lived on site. One day, I think in January 1940, a gale blowing at 64 miles an hour (90 k.) buffeted the buildings, the tall pines and fig-trees. It was a frightening experience outdoors. In the process a whole leaden ridge capping flew off from the roof of the school onto the asphalt.*

*In February 1947, at the age of 18, while enrolled at Sydney Teachers' College, I was delighted to spend two weeks of my practice teaching period in the old school. I recall, when criticising the conduct of one boy, that the children in the class were quick to remind me that he was the son of the Head, Mr Harris. I believe I gained immediate respect from the children by stating that he would be treated no differently from any other. In July of 1946 the old teacher's vested residence had been vacated by the Headmaster to provide adequate playing area for the Girls' Department. Some terracing of the boys' sloping playground was suggested and ultimately carried out.*

*In 1967 I enthusiastically returned to the old school to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the institution and now in my old age I have had the greatest pleasure in telling a few tales out of school.*

**ALEX MC ANDREW (born 1928)**

Below is a sample of the copperplate style of a pupil in Second Class, 1936: The writing tablet was supplied free of charge to every pupil. Pupils wrote then only in pencil. In the writing tablet were these headings: words, writing practice, dictations plus stories made up from the pupil's own experience or imagination. For good work, one received a purple star stamped on by the teacher. In this particular twenty-four-page writing tablet there were stars awarded for good work plus the nought indicating no errors in the dictation passages. This particular 12-page exercise book, with parallel lines to guide neat and tidy writing to keep was completely free of spelling errors. Below are samples of the writings:



### HEARD IN THE SCHOOLYARD IN THE 1930s

- My Dad drives a Rolls.
- Gee whiz! A Rolls Royce!
- No, it's a Rolls Kanardly. It rolls down the hill and can 'ardly get up the other side.



Above the cover of a copy of Australian history  
issued free to every pupil in Australia.

### *Gleanings from the Archives of the School of Laughter*

PARENTS' NIGHT CONVERSATION BETWEEN PARENT AND TEACHER: — *Why do kiddies change when they go to High School. — Well, one of the reasons is that they become adolescents. You know what that is, don't you? Adolescence is the age at which children stop asking questions, because they think they know all the answers.*

BROTHERLY LOVE: The teacher had praised one of his boys for an exceedingly well-drawn map of Ryde, but on consideration he inquired: *Did perhaps someone at home help you with this work? No, Sir. Are you sure you had no help from your big sister? ... I'm absolutely sure, Sir. She did it all herself.*

OUR DAD IS NO DUMB OX: In the early days many of parents were themselves without much education, but some children did get assistance with their homework. One girl claimed that her father helped her to fail in English, when, for example, she had to find out the meaning of the word "equinox". *Well, my girl, said Dad, who, of course, knew something about equestrian events, equinox is a mythical animal that is half horse and half ox.*

EXAMINER'S COMMENT: *I found your essay to be good and original. However, the part that was original was not good and the part that was good was not original.*

PREFERENCES ON THE SCHOOL CALENDAR: Teachers and pupils, however dedicated to their school, simply adore the following months: January, April, July, October and December.

SELECTIONS FROM THE STAFF LIBRARY: *Traffic on Lane Cove Road in the 19th Century* by Orson Carriage. *The Infamous Caning at Ryde School* by Irish teacher, Paddy Whack. *Make Money After Leaving School* by ex-pupil, Maximilian Ayre. *Teachers Revolt against the Department of Education* by Hugo First.

A PROBLEM OF ENGLISH SPELLING: One little scholar of English history wrote this: *When Oliver Crumble and his soldiers went to Ireland, they massaged all the women and children.* [Well, we can suppose that was better than being massacred.]

CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE: Father to son in Kindergarten: *Well, my little man, what happened at school to-day.* Five-year-old: *Well, Dad, Miss Small was leaning over my desk looking at my drawing and one of her lungs fell out.*

### WHO AM I?

Take my first letter away and I remain unchanged. Take my second letter away and I remain unchanged. Take my third letter away and I remain unchanged. Take away all my letters and still I remain exactly the same. See last page of this section on Ryde School.

### CREED OF THE RELUCTANT SCHOLARS

*The more we learn, the more we know.*

*The more we know, the more we forget.*

*The more we forget, the less we know.*

*The less we know, the less we forget.*

*The less we forget, the more we know.*

*So why learn at all?*

## A LESSON IN LIFE FOR ALL

It is said that here is only one thing permanent in life: that is change. Change happened with our weights and measures and with our currency. The task of conversion was assisted by an appealing teaching aid for adults and pupils alike. It is obvious in class or in life that, if the lesson is interesting, learning will follow.

## MONEY MONEY MONEY

Let us look in some detail at the change from the L S D [Librae Soldi Denarii, Latin for pounds, shillings and pence] currency to the simplicity of the French metric system on February 14, 1966. The change was actually liberating for school pupils who probably didn't know where the letters L.S.D. came from.

The sign £ refers to the pound which in 1966 became two dollars. This symbol is a decorative L from the Roman word *libra* meaning a pound in both currency and weight. The *d* refers to a penny later converted to a cent. It comes from the first letter of the Roman coin *denarius*. Divided into two it was a halfpenny. *Oz.* is an abbreviation of Latin *uncia*, an ounce. *Dwt* is a pennyweight.

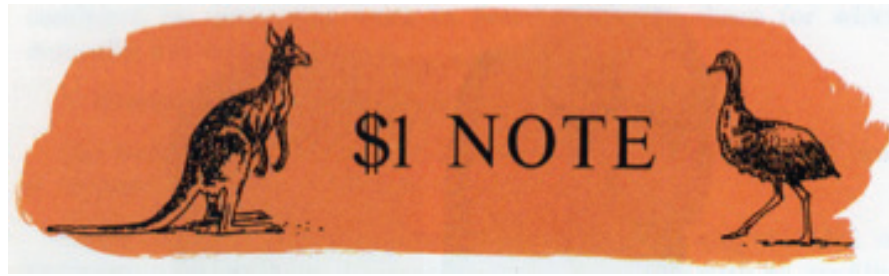
Our schools helped to acquaint their charges with the changes, aided by a booklet issued free to all by the Reserve Bank of Australia and, with it on TV and radio, a clever adaptation of the old song *Click Go the Shears*:

*In come the dollars, in come the cents  
To replace the pound and the shillings and the pence.  
Be prepared, folks, when the coins begin to mix  
On the fourteenth of February, 1966.*

*Clink go the cents, folks, clink, clink, clink.  
Changeover day is closer than you think.  
Love the value of the coins and the way that they appear;  
Things will be much smoother when the decimal point is here.*

The method chosen was a sensational success. Where there is keen interest, whether in the classroom or outside, sound learning follows. There were more lessons to be learned from an illustrated booklet in colour issued free to every pupil in Australia.

Our new banknotes came in colour depicting notable persons in our history, while our coins featured some of our unique Australian animals.



On the front of the one dollar note is a portrait of the Queen, a version of Australia's Coat of Arms with the kangaroo and emu supporting the shield with the emblems of the six States. The word dollar comes to us from North America from the German coin *taler*, short for Joachimstaler describing a valley in present Czechoslovakia. The German word *tal* means valley — Joachims Valley.



On the back there are examples of Aboriginal bark painting, of rock paintings and carvings. Also shown are reptiles, animals and Aboriginal tribesmen hunting and one painting on bark.



A close-up of an Aborigine painting on bark.



On the front of the \$2 note, replacing the pound, is a portrait of John Macarthur prominent in the development of Australia's wool industry. On the back of the \$2 note pictured here, is James Farrer, who developed wheat called Federation, a quick-growing, drought resistant wheat which grew very well in Australian conditions. The old pound was popularly known as a quid which comes from classical Latin *quid*, short for *quid pro quo*, something in return for something purchased.

There were two hundred and forty pennies in a pound. We may have lost our pennies and gained cents, but some of us still value the philosophy of penny wise pound foolish. We might still as say to someone *a penny for your thoughts*. We might still be venturesome with *in for a penny in for a pound*. Older folk may still say: *I'll bet pounds to peanuts that I'm right*, or *I made a pretty penny on the deal*. On the other side of the coin, we might still have a pound for stray animals, but the sense of that pound comes from an old English word for an enclosure.



The raising of sheep for wool, and to a lesser extent for mutton has been for long Australia's most important industry. Our most famous breed of sheep, the merino, which originated in Spain, hence the name, which derives from the Latin *majorinus*, a male sheep.



The front of the \$5 note shows Sir Joseph Banks, the botanist who sailed with Captain James Cook to Botany Bay; also a collection of Australian native plants including the Banksia.



On the back of the \$5 note are drawings of women and children, migrant ships including the “Waverley” and Sydney buildings at the time of Mrs Caroline Chisolm, one of Australia’s greatest pioneer women.



The \$10 features Francis Howard Greenway, appointed Government architect in 1816 and St James Church in King Street, Sydney, which he designed.



On the back of the \$10 note is a portrait of Henry Lawson, Australian poet and short-story writer. To quote but two lines from one of his many poems which was written for Australia Day:

*I love the land where the Waratah grows  
Ant the wattle-bough blooms on the hill.*



The \$20 note features a portrait of Charles Kingsford-Smith (1897-1935), a pioneer of aviation in Australia and of air routes to Europe and North America. Smithy, as he became known, was a pilot in World War I, where he was awarded the Military Cross.



The Sydney International Airport as well as the Sydney suburb of Kingsford is named after him. His plane above, in which he was the first to fly across the Pacific Ocean from North America, was known as the *Southern Cross*. The flight took 83 hours and eleven minutes.



On the back of the \$20 note an aeronautical engineer, Laurence Hargrave, is shown with copies of his drawings of flying machines and kites now in the Sydney Museum of Arts and Sciences.

**OUR DECIMAL COINS:**

One side of our new coins featured Australian native fauna: One cent, which replaced the old penny, shows the feather-glider, our tiniest possum.



The two cent coin, which replaced the threepence, features the frilled lizard.



The five cent coin, replacing the old sixpence, known as a *zack* from Dutch *zes* or German *sechs*, both meaning six, shows the spiny ant-eater, like the platypus, the only egg-laying mammal in the world. A common expression to describe something of little worth was: *It's not worth a zack!*



The unique platypus pictured on our twenty-cent coin: The twenty cent coin, replacing the two shillings or florin, so called because it depicted a flower on one side, the Latin for which is, shows the duck-billed platypus [Greek for flat foot], like the spiny ant-eater, the only egg-laying mammal in the world.



On the ten cent coin, replacing the shilling [known as a *deener* from the German *zehner* (tenner) and also a *bob*], we see the lyre bird with its beautiful tail resembling a harp.



The beautiful lyre bird does not fly like other birds. Its aerial movements mostly consist of flying jumps among trees and rocks and skimming down hillsides.

The word cent, by the way, comes from Latin *centum* meaning 100. So there are 100 cents in a dollar. When you see the sign % on your computer, it is the percentage sign meaning *per hundred*.

**QUICK QUIZ:** Why do we have two pronunciations for *either* and *neither* [i or e]? The reason goes back to the Hanoverian King George III, who imitated his native German pronunciation by saying *i*. The common people said *ee*. Confusion has reigned ever since.

**TASK FOR ALL READERS:**

Can you decipher this message?

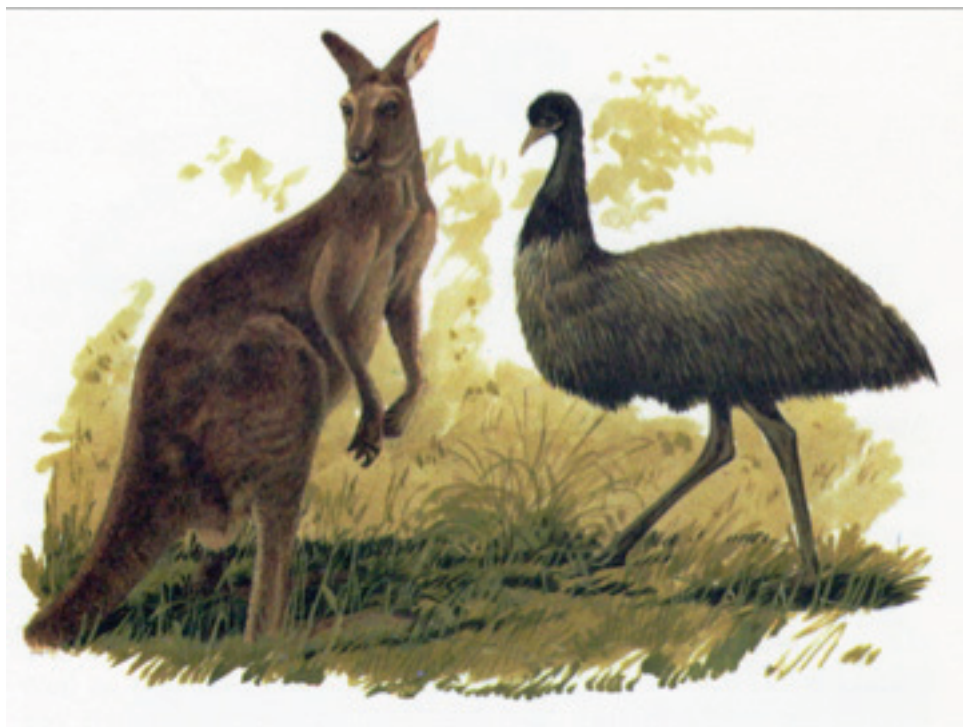
L F H S T U S N D W S — I E A I S P A D O N

Answer: Take one letter from each side at a time and you will find that

L I F E    H A S    I T S    U P S    A N D    D O W N S.



On the fifty cent coin two of our best-known creatures supporting the shield in the Australian Coat of Arms. These animals well represent our appropriate motto, Advance Australia, as they cannot go backwards.



**SHAKESPEARE SAID IT:  
CREEPING LIKE SNAIL UNWILLING TO SCHOOL**



Since the introduction of the new currency there have been additions, such as the \$50 and \$100 dollar notes, and then the deletion of the one-cent and two-cent coins. Teachers might quiz their pupils about the historical images on the current notes.

**QUICK QUIZ:**

Which Sydney suburbs have the shortest names?

Ryde and Como.

In the meantime, children, adults alike, enjoy yourselves, without ever doing harm to others, as your eighty-five-year-old author sings this vintage song:

*Enjoy yourself, while you're still in the pink  
Enjoy yourself, it's later than you think.  
The years roll by as quickly as a wink.  
Enjoy yourself, enjoy yourself. It's later than you think!*

**TEASER:**

Artful pupil: *Please, Miss, can you tell me this: What has four legs and flies?*  
Teacher: *A dead horse or a dead cow no doubt.*

We are all born with different intelligence. Teachers of old were well aware of this. What they did not know is that among those with specific learning difficulties are those of potentially normal intelligence, yet they encounter problems in reading and writing in particular. A most common problem is *dyslexia* [Greek meaning *poor in words*], where there is a confusion in associating written symbols and sounds such as a “b” and “d” or “was” and ‘saw’.

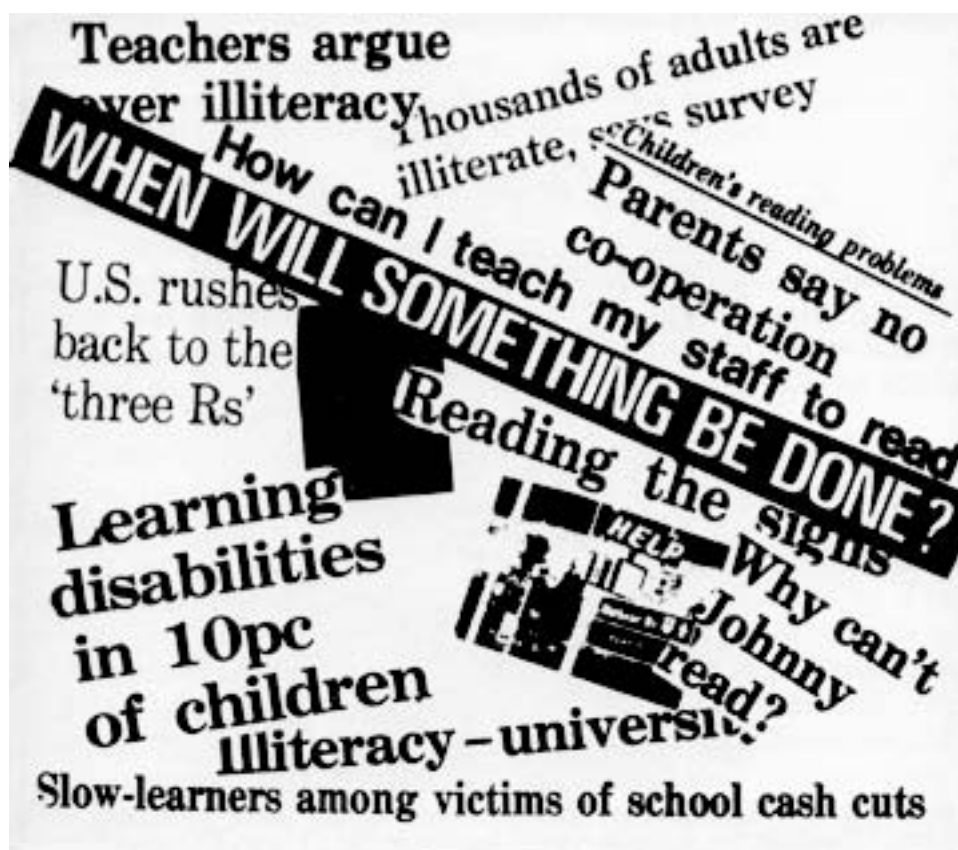


The dyslexic child may learn readily by ear, but finds difficulty in associating written symbols with sounds. The problem is genital and is handed down variably from generation to generation. It is a brain dysfunction caused by a confusion between left and right dominance and often occurs in very intelligent children. Many of those who suffer from conditions leading to learning difficulties are quite unaware of their disability, and very quickly become socially, educationally and emotionally disadvantaged.

Dialogue between a mother and her son who is still lying in bed when it is time to get up: *Come on, my boy. You've got to go to school. / I don't want to go! / But you must go, son! / I don't want to go. Why should I? / I'll give you two reasons — first, you're 41 years old and second — you're the Headmaster!*

Eight and twenty blackbirds sitting in the rain;  
Of these I shot and killed seven. How many did remain?  
See answer page 115.

Many children who experience SLD [specific learning difficulties] are considered perfectly normal at home in pre-school days. If they are migrant children, trying to cope with their own language plus English as a foreign language, then the double disadvantage is immense. SLD children learn one thing very quickly and that is to conceal rather than reveal their problems. If the problems are undetected and the children remain their whole school life without specific help and without understanding, they feel in turn, shock, isolation, anger, guilt, shame, depression and frustration.



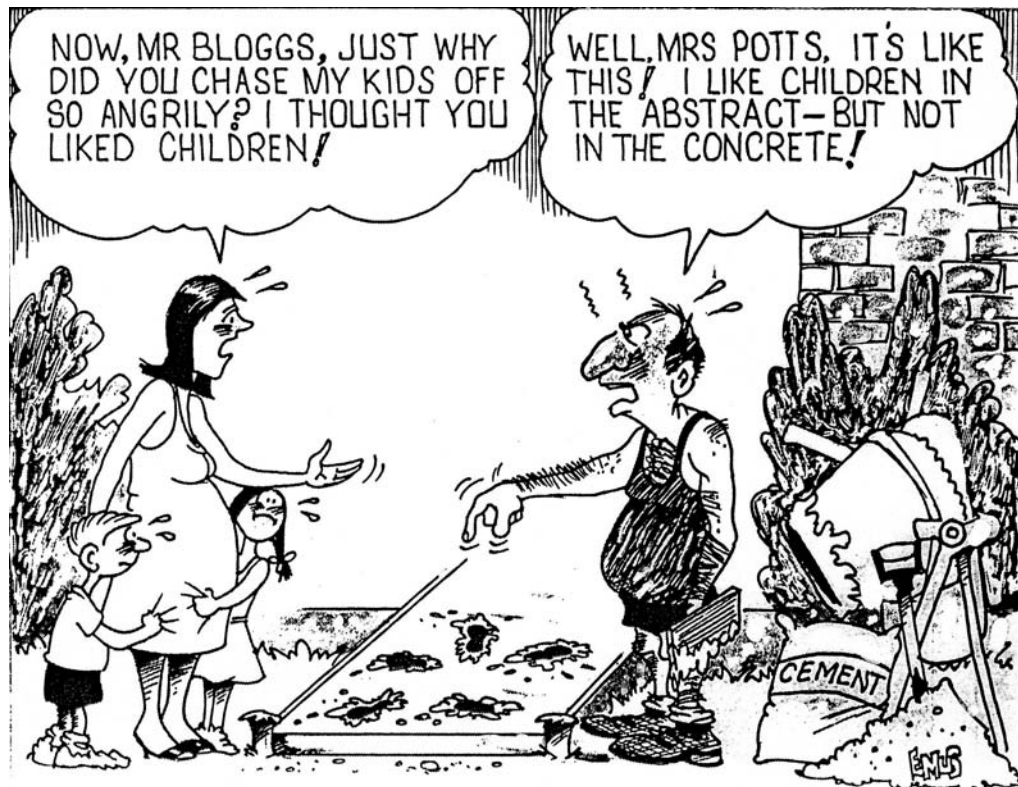
### TEST YOUR AWARENESS

Just read the following sentence below and count the number of times the letter F appears. Count only once and do not go back and count them again.

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.

After writing down your score, read the sentence again. Any difference?

It would be an ideal world if all children liked their teachers and if all teachers liked every one of their pupils. It would be an ideal world if both adults and children behaved sensibly. The following cartoon depicts an easy way to explain the difference between abstract and concrete nouns.



Answer to question WHO AM I? on page 97: *I am a postman.*

### FROM A TEACHER'S COLLECTION OF CLASSROOM GEMS

1. The people in our district are farmers and *rare* pigs. 2. Queen Elizabeth was one of the wisest monarchs who ever sat on the throne of England. She never got married. 3. A *gladiator* is a thing city people use to warm a room. 4. When King Arthur needed advice, he used to send for Merlin, who was a very wise *lizard*. 5. When Hume and Hovell came to cross the Murray, they had no boat, so Hume took a dray off its wheels and, putting a *tar pole* in it, soon got over. 6. A *Barbarian* is a man who cuts your hair. 7. When Clive returned to England, he was fined for taking heavy *brides* from the Indians. 8. And the Three Wise Men brought *gold, franks and cents*. 9. The natives of Papua-New Guinea are cannibals. They live in tribes and are ruled by their *chefs*. 10. Joan of Arc was born of a French *pheasant*. 11. What does the measure *lb* stand for? *Leg before wicket*. 12. What is the use of bullock hide? It helps to keep the meat inside.

13. Does your father say a prayer before the evening meal? No, he doesn't have to. Mum is really a good cook. 14. New smarty pants pupil: *My Dad and I know every word in the dictionary.* Teacher: *Oh yes, what does prevaricate mean?* Pupil: *Well, that's one that Dad knows.* Teacher: *I am quite sure he does!*

### \* INNOCENT JEST \*

Teacher (with his hat on): *I will use my hat to represent the planet Mars.*

*Now are there any questions before I continue?*

Student: *Sir, is it true that Mars is uninhabited?*

## ADVANCE AUSTRALIA FAIR

*Australians all, let us rejoice, for we are young and free.  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil; our home is girt by sea.  
Our land abounds in nature's giftsof beauty rich and rare;  
In hist'ry's page let every stage Advance Australia fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing : "Advance Australia Fair".*

Just on one hundred years ago, they were singing, in support of Australia's part in the Great War, the following from the *School Magazine*:

**AUSTRALIA FOR EVER.**

Key D.

*mf*

|   |       |  |         |  |                      |  |         |  |                      |   |
|---|-------|--|---------|--|----------------------|--|---------|--|----------------------|---|
| { | :s    |  | s :m :s |  | d <sup>1</sup> :t :l |  | s :m :s |  | d <sup>1</sup> :t :l | } |
| { | Aus - |  | tra -   |  | for                  |  | ev -    |  | er!                  | } |
| { | :m    |  | m :d :m |  | m :s :f              |  | m :d :m |  | m :s :f              | } |

|   |                |  |                                   |  |                      |  |              |   |
|---|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|--------------|---|
| { | s :f :m        |  | f :s :l                           |  | r :m :m              |  | :m :s        | } |
| { | heart from the |  | land of my                        |  | birth; . . .         |  | . . . To the | } |
| { | m :r :d        |  | l <sub>1</sub> :t <sub>1</sub> :d |  | t <sub>1</sub> :m :m |  | :m :m        | } |

|   |             |  |                        |  |                 |  |                      |   |
|---|-------------|--|------------------------|--|-----------------|--|----------------------|---|
| { | s :m :s     |  | d <sup>1</sup> :m :t l |  | s :m :s         |  | d <sup>1</sup> :m :m | } |
| { | land of the |  | brave, Which           |  | none shall en - |  | slave, To the        | } |
| { | m :d :m     |  | s :m :f                |  | m :d :m         |  | m :m :d . d          | } |

|   |                |  |              |  |                      |  |                      |   |
|---|----------------|--|--------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| { | f :s :l        |  | s :l :t      |  | d <sup>1</sup> :m :m |  | m <sup>1</sup> :m :m | } |
| { | hap - pi - est |  | land up - on |  | earth, . . .         |  | To the               | } |
| { | r :m :f        |  | m :f :r      |  | m :m :m              |  | s :m :s              | } |

*ff*

|   |  |  |              |  |                      |  |       |  |
|---|--|--|--------------|--|----------------------|--|-------|--|
| { | m <sup>1</sup> :r <sup>1</sup> :d <sup>1</sup> |  | s :l :t      |  | d <sup>1</sup> :m :m |  | :m :m |  |
| { | hap - pi - est                                 |  | land up - on |  | earth, . . .         |  | . . . |  |
| { | s :f :m  |  | m :f :r      |  | m :m :m              |  | :m :m |  |

Answer to how many blackbirds that remained: Just the seven dead ones.

### NOTE FROM A RETIRING TEACHER

*It's time to bid you, dear readers, a reluctant farewell from my favorite school:*

*Wish me luck as you wave me good-bye!  
Not a tear, just a cheer on my way.  
Give me a smile I can keep all the while  
In my heart while I'm away!  
Till we meet once again you and I,  
Wish me luck as I wave you good-bye!*



*I'm so weary. I need a cuppa.*

In the times of the foregoing tales the stable beverage in Australian households was tea. It was the same in school staff rooms. Tea was avidly drunk by most teachers at recess and lunchtime, sometimes before school started — all in order to regale themselves.

To-day coffee seems to predominate, especially with younger members of staff. In some schools children were trained to leave the classroom some minutes before recess or lunch to go to the Staff Room and put on the kettle or electric jug for the convenience of the teachers. To-day, coffee, as well as tea, is a refresher for the weary *chalk*. Coffee is native to Ethiopia, whence it was spread abroad by Arabs. By the sixteenth century it had reached Europe and the Americas, but was popularised in Australia only in the 1960s through intensive advertising, especially on television.

**FINAL QUESTION:** Which is the longest word which you can make up from the the top line of a typewriter or computer, namely Q W E R T Y U I O P ? The answer appears below on the next page.

How about some final words of wisdom? Here they are:

### **A LESSON FROM THE MONKEYS**

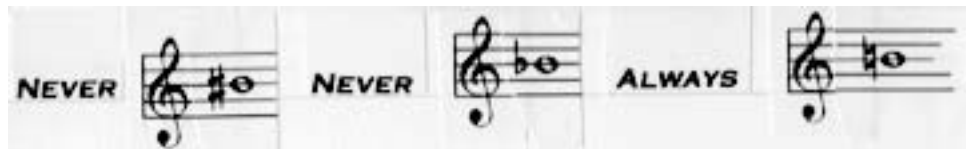
*Three monkeys sat in a coconut tree,  
Discussing things as they are said to be.  
Said one to the other: 'Now listen, you two.  
There's a certain rumour that can't be true,  
That man descended from our noble race.  
Why the very idea is a real disgrace!  
No monkey ever deserted his wife,  
Starved her babies and ruined her life!  
And you've never known another monk  
To leave her babies with others to bunk,  
Or pass them on from one to another,  
Till they scarcely know who is their mother.  
Here's another thing a monk won't do:  
Go out at night and get on the stew,  
Or use a gun, club or knife  
To take some other monkey's life.  
Yes, man descended — let's make no fuss.*

***But, brother, he certainly didn't descend from us!"***

So, now it's time to ask the poet:

“WHAT’S HAPPENED TO YOUR VERSES?  
THEY’RE MUCH LIGHTER AND TRITER.  
“WELL, MY DEAR, IT’S VERY CLEAR,  
I’M USING A NEW TRIPEWRITER.”

In the meantime some advice for young and old:



For the non-musicians:

**NEVER BE SHARP NEVER BE FLAT ALWAYS BE NATURAL  
PLUS GOOD ADVICE FOR ALL: BE ON TIME**



Next we have a couple of former schools to study ,  
namely AGINCOURT HALL and MARSFIELD.

**WHO AM I? I AM THE POSTMAN**

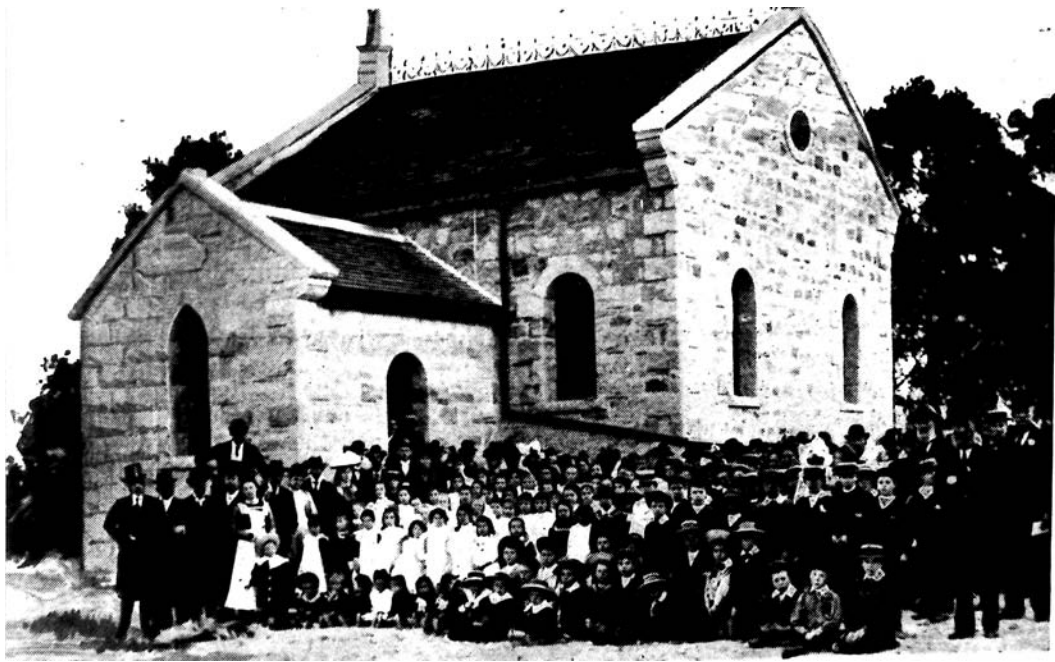
**THE ANSWER TO THE FINAL QUESTION ABOVE, WOULD YOU  
BELIEVE, IS:  
TYPEWRITER**

## AGINCOURT HALL: FIRST SCHOOL IN MARSFIELD

An outstanding example of local citizen Henry Curzon-Smith's concern for the community at large was the provision, entirely at his cost, of a school for the local children. Smith Street in Epping linking Pembroke Street with Epping Road is named after him. Curzon Street in Ryde is named after his wife's maiden name, which Henry added to his non-illustrious name of Smith. When Epping was granted a school in 1901, young Marsfielders were expected to cross Terry's Creek and attend there. As a consolation to the people of Marsfield, who had been officially denied a school in their immediate area by the government authority, Henry built Agincourt Hall in Marsfield. The school was ceremoniously opened in August 1901 in the presence of a Parliamentary party on the understanding that, with a suitable enrolment, the State would take over the running of the school. Despite the attendance of 80 pupils, the Government failed to assume responsibility and the school was abandoned after six months. The local community could not afford to pay a teacher's salary, schools supplies and the maintenance of the building and grounds. The school was opened with great fanfare and the attendance of Government officials. Let us go back to the scene:

*A large party went from Sydney at the invitation of Mrs H. Curzon-Smith, and was welcomed by the hostess at Curzon Hall. The party journeyed to the school building close by, where the residents of the community had gathered in large numbers. Here the children between 70 and 80 were mustered. After having sung several part songs, they indulged in sports for which numerous prizes were given. Shortly before three o'clock the Parliamentary party arrived on the ground, having been driven up in vehicles from Eastwood Station., preceded by an escort of mounted police and accompanied by the local band. The party consisted of Mr T. Waddell (Treasurer), Mr Frank Farnell M.L.A. (Member for the District), Messrs D. O'Connor, J. Haynes and E. V. C. Broughton (members of the Legislative Assembly).*

*There upon arrival they were welcomed by the Mayor (Alderman E. Gallagher) and aldermen of Marsfield. Mr T. Waddell asked Mrs Curzon-Smith to formally open the building, at the same time handing her a beautifully chased gold Yale key, which bore a suitable inscription. With the handsome souvenir Mrs Curzon-Smith unlocked the door and the gathering entered the building where luncheon was served. Mr T. Waddell who was accorded a cordial reception, expressed the pleasure it gave him to find a lady and a gentleman possessing a public spirit that induced them to spend a large sum of money in building a school for the benefit and education of the local juveniles. Such an example might be followed by other wealthy people of the State. (Applause)*



A glorious day in 1901 for Marsfielders young and old was the opening of Agincourt Hall, the very first school in Marsfield built and equipped by local philanthropist Henry Curzon-Smith. The sandstone was taken from a quarry which is now a waterhole within the grounds of Macquarie University. Because of lack of government support the school was phased out in mid 1902. — By courtesy of Ryde Historical Society.

*During the evening the celebrations were continued, and a display of fireworks [provided by local pyrotechnist, J. H. Scott] was followed by a concert in which Mrs J. Cowan, Mrs Hellyer, Mrs Lindsay Brown, the Misses A. B. Cooper, Curzon-Smith, Hayes, L. Beverley, A. and E. Small, Hellyer, Deane, Messrs F. Smith, Hoskings, J. A. Bernasconi, S. Beverley, W. Bennett, Deuchattel, Grills and Norton and the Reverend C. T. West contributed items. At 9 p.m. there was a large gathering at Curzon Hall where a ball was held to celebrate the occasion. It was largely attended and dancing was indulged in to good music in the large drawing-room, the supper tables being laid in the corridors on the upper floor. The guests numbered about 100 and were hospitably entertained by Mr and Mrs Curzon-Smith. The success of the function was due in great measure to the efforts of the Committee of which Mayor Gallagher was chairman, Mr Philip Dowling Hon. Secretary and Mr Sydney Small Treasurer. The building was erected from plans prepared by Mr D. T. Morrow of St George's Hall, Newtown. \* The Sydney Daily Mail August 24 1901 p. 487.*

In this article *The Sydney Mail* also described Marsfield as a very beautiful district of high bushland east of the railway between Eastwood and Epping, formerly a fruit-growing country, but is now making good progress as a residential suburb.



Pupils of Agincourt Hall on the corner of Abuklea and Herring Roads, in countrified Marsfield. The boy with the bow tie in the back row by the shoulder of the female teacher is Ernie Horner [1896-1972]. The stone school building can be seen in the top right corner of the photo.

The sandstone building with tiled roof had walls 14 inches thick. It consisted of one large room 24ft x 34 ft, two small rooms 12ft x 10ft and an underground room 34ft x 24ft. The educational authorities were happy enough to have a school built at no cost to the State and it was understood that, if Agincourt Hall were attended by a sufficient number of children, the Government would take it over. The school was successfully maintained for six months with an average attendance of 80 scholars, but as numbers declined, the Government support was not forthcoming. The school was abandoned and the building was used for public purposes, social gatherings, theatrical performances, lectures etc. The disappointment of both parents and children can be well imagined, not to mention the philanthropist who built it. A further disappointment is that the well-built edifice was later demolished.

**WHO'S WHO AT THE ZOO:** A few young Marsfielders spent a day during the holidays at Taronga Park Zoo. They were intrigued by the monkeys and their antics, when a priest passing by made a joke: *Looking at your relatives, eh, boys?* One boy replied politely: *Yes, Father.*



MR. HARRY CURZON-SMITH.



MRS. HARRY CURZON-SMITH.

### PIONEERS OF THE MARSFIELD SCHOOL

Harry and Isabella Curzon-Smith. They married on June 6, 1884. Before living in the magnificent Curzon Hall on the corner of Balaclava and Agincourt Roads, they lived close to the northern railway line. For many years the railway concessions and the lease of Jenolan Caves House provided them with a goodly income. — Photo by courtesy of Betty Browne (nee Christie).

#### **A NOTE ON HARRY SMITH — PROPERTY-OWNER EXTRAORDINAIRE**

Henry Smith, a shrewd businessman, was the lessee of the N.S.W. Railway Refreshment Rooms at Sydney and at a good number of key railway stations en route, which, in their day, were a popular venue for hungry travellers. In days when there was no dining cars on long distance trains, ten minute stops were made, for example, at Goulburn and Newcastle. Passengers would rush out and line up for their cup of tea and toast, scones, pies, cakes, sweets and drinks, then rush back on board to consume the fare.

Harry Smith also held the lease on Jenolan Caves House from 1898 to 1916. Harry enhanced his name to Curzon-Smith, Curzon being the middle name of his wife, Isabella Curzon Webb, who was related to Lord Curzon (1859-1925) statesman and one time Viceroy of India with whose family she had once lived in England. It is praiseworthy that Harry Smith used his wealth for the benefit of the community. He used to run a horse-bus from Gladesville to Curzon Park at the northern end of Culloden Road by the Lane Cove River where he operated a picnic ground.

**JEST A MOMENT:** From a child's composition: *Last week a workman fell from the De Burgh's Bridge and died of infernal injuries.*



### **STATELY CURZON HALL —A MAGNIFICENT MANSION IN MARSFIELD**

The earliest 19th century homesteads on the first land grants were very modest compared with the average home of to-day. In general those that followed in the first half of the 20th century were also unimposing. There were some exceptions. The most notable of these was the magnificent mansion built by Epping resident, Harry Smith, to-day known as Curzon Hall. Built between 1897 and 1901, it was the most sumptuous home in the whole of the Ryde district and for many, many miles beyond. Stately Curzon Hall stands on the south-eastern corner of the junction of Agincourt and Balaclava Roads, Eastwood. It was the showplace of Sydney, the biggest private home in the metropolis. The building with its 14-inch thick walls of local sandstone remains an architectural gem in the Italian Renaissance style vying with the grandeur of Government House in Sydney. Its ballroom measured 70x 40 ft. Cedar panelling and staircase and leadlight windows were other features. Its colonnades and arched balconies afford the edifice with a cloistered look. It is no wonder it attracted the attention of the Vincentian Brothers who purchased it in 1922 for £8000 when it became St Joseph's Seminary, a training centre for priests. A chapel was added in 1934. To-day Curzon Hall is one of the nation's finest reception centres. The edifice is all the more remarkable, since it was built in the era of the 1890s during a severe economic depression, yet provided jobs for quite a few in the local area. The stone was quarried from land by Vittoria now Talavera Road about a mile away. The quarry, now a pond is now in the grounds of Macquarie University. — Photo by author 2009.

Mr and Mrs Curzon-Smith with their glorious home and many properties must have been the envy of the local population who perhaps more than once considered this thought:

*How glorious is the rich man's state, his house so fine, his wealth so great!  
Heaven is unjust, you must agree. Why all to him and none to me?*

Marsfield youngsters would have to wait nearly another decade before a Public School was established.



It's 1922: Marsfield schoolboys and girls with friends ready and anxious to attend a fancy Dress ball in the Marsfield Town Hall in 1922. — Photo by courtesy of Bob Foggin.

#### BEFORE WE PROCEED TO OUR NEXT SCHOOL

At the end of the year the sixth class boys presented their teacher, who was quite bald, with a present which, when unwrapped revealed a large hair comb. The alert teacher was not backward in coming forward with his words:

“Thank you so much, boys, I can assure you that this is something I will never part with!”

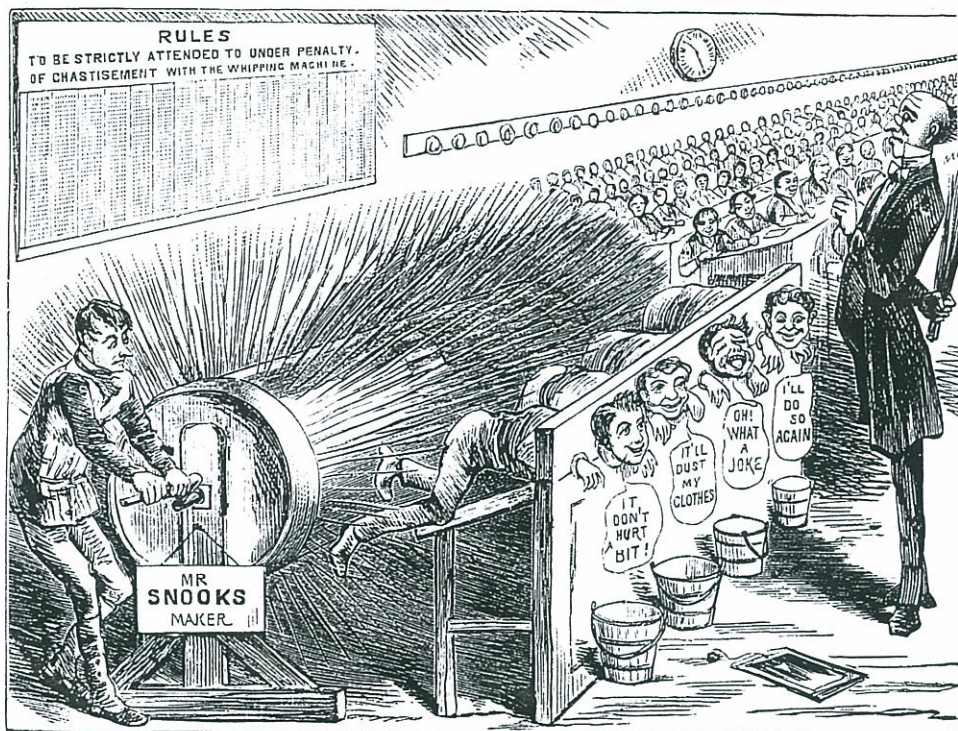
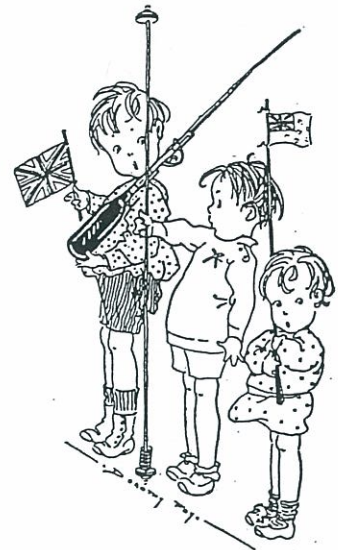
At the end of term the teacher and his wife celebrated by dining at a restaurant in Sydney Town. When the waiter, anxious for a tip, asked: *How did you find your steak, Sir?* The teacher replied: *Well, it took a while, but I finally found it behind a potato.*

\*

Do you know why a pen-knife was so called? Well, it dates from earlier times when the quill, a feather, was used to write with. Since it was soft, it soon became worn and blunt. A small knife was therefore a handy tool to sharpen the quill. The pen-knife has now become more known as the pocket knife.

#### JEST A MOMENT

*Like the lava from a crater came the gravy from his plate.  
He failed to tip the waiter, so the waiter tipped his plate.*



**Snooks' Patent Whipping Machine for Flogging Naughty Boys in School.**

"The Snooks' Whipping Machine has proved a total failure." — "Times."



# MARSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Established 1910

## MOTTO: LABOUR WITH HONOUR

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after much debate and petitions from both Marsfielders and Eppingites for schools in their area, the Department of Public Instruction decided on an economical solution, namely to provide one school to suit both areas. For that reason the school was sited at the eastern end of the Epping settlement and therefore as close as possible to Marsfield across Terrys Creek. This, however, did not suit the Marsfielders who fought to have their own school built on the western corner of Balaclava Road and what is to-day Epping Road. The school began as an Infants School at 11 a.m. on Friday August 16, 1910 under Miss Bond and did not reach primary stage until 1918.

What follows are snippets of its history which came to an end in 1989, very much to the regret of staff, pupils and very loyal, but furious ex-pupils.

For decades North Ryde was mainly a farming area with a comparatively small population. Local roads were in appalling condition. After World War I many newcomers arrived from continental Europe, especially Italy, still more after World War II. They adapted readily to the rural area.

### SCHOOL PROBLEM FOR DAUGHTER OF GERMAN MIGRANT

Lettie St Julian (born Marsfield nee Krix 1922-2007) recalls her youth on nine acres at Marsfield: *Our farm was on the eastern side of Balaclava Road and south of Sebastopol Road (now Epping Road). It is now part of the parking area of the Macquarie University. My Dad arrived in Australia from Germany in 1897. Purely by chance, while walking along George Street, he came upon his brother who was a bridge builder. He jumped ship and stayed here. He first worked at Harringtons, later became naturalised and then with friends bought this property at Marsfield. In due course he became a naturalised citizen and bought a farm in Balaclava Road, Marsfield, on land which became part of the University of Macquarie. There he earned an income from poultry, cut flowers and vegetables. He married my mother (nee West) in 1922 and always wanted us children, myself and five brothers, to be regarded as Australians.*

*Dad went in for poultry, then vegetables and flowers. I worked on the farm all my young life. Because of World War I there was still strong resentment against anyone with a slightly German name. I personally had no problem at school. In fact I loved it, but my brothers did. My elder brother used to be tormented and called a squarehead. The same thing happened to some of the Italian children. Children can be very cruel, at times more so than adults.*

## MY MEMORIES OF MARSFIELD SCHOOL 1929-1934

Lettie St Julian (nee Krix born Marsfield 1922-2007): *In 1928 I started school at five years and five months, but after a few weeks I contracted whooping cough along with my three brothers. We all slept crosswise on a double bed and Mum slept on a stretcher beside us. My brother was about three months old and we were all very distressed with the coughing. I can remember having my arms around the verandah post and ‘heaving my heart’ out. Dad ‘s old friend, Mrs Maslin, recommended we have warm milk straight from the cow. The first drink made me vomit the muck up and the second drink was nourishing. I didn’t return to school that year. So it was 1929 when I enrolled again. Mrs Keevil was our teacher. There was in the classroom a large blackboard in front of us and charts with sound and representative words illustrated by sounds and words [a— apple, e-egg, i-ink, o-ox, u-umbrella]. Our Headmaster had painted a huge map of Australia above the blackboard. There was a fireplace in one corner and the piano near the sliding wall, which allowed access to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes’ room.*

*My desk mate was as frail as I was hearty and I pictured her as “The Little Match Girl” — a tear-jerker story that Mum or dad had read to me out of a School Reader. After just playing around the sheds and farm at home with the cats and dog, school was a real eye-opener for me. In First and Second Class we lined up at the northern end of the school and Mrs Keevil stood on the verandah to address us. She had short hair and always wore a tortoise-shell clip to keep it tidy, then a popular device. Below this point there was a pretty garden, serviced, I suppose by the boys. There was the weather shed and the bubblers behind us and the boys’ toilet further behind that. The girls’ toilet was some 30-40 feet away.*

*In front of the school was the big map of Australia built by our Headmaster, Mr Carradice and the “big boys” earlier in the decade. Every Monday morning it used to b “dressed” with little tin flags to mark the railway stations. The rivers were painted in silver and the Australian Fleet was painted in the Great Australian Bight. Mining was represented by stones painted in gold, silver etc. and produce by tiny sacks of wheat, bales of wool and all manner of things to help the kids learn about our country. The “big boys” hauled the flag-pole from the bush where Trafalgar Place is now. A time capsule was buried under the flagpole, but it isn’t known whether it was re-covered when the Main Roads Department resumed the corner and destroyed “Australia”.*

*QUICK THINKING: Sixth Class Pupil: Excuse me, Sir, it seems a little strange. You are wearing one black shoe and one brown shoe. Teacher: Nothing strange about that. I’ve got another pair at home just like them.*

*Towards Balaclava Road by the map was a concrete circle representing the South Pole with a rod in the centre to cast a shadow to tell the time. Further on was the school gate with a row of pine trees towards the east and a large Camphorlaurel tree between the school and the fence with large logs placed around it for seating. Behind the building was a large bricked-in sandpit and also a Pittosporum tree for partial shade. There were also logs under various trees around the yard.*

*Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes assembled between the map and the fence. The hat-racks were on the verandahs. On the walls were slide-in racks where illustrations, possibly from the National Geographic magazine, mounted on cardboard by Mr Carradice used to be displayed. In First and Second class we used to sing the tonic-solfa [Doh-Rey-Mi-Soh-Fa-La-Ti-Doh, being started off by a tuning fork. One song was “Alice Blue Gown”, which was apparently a hit in the Twenties. We used to sing this song:*

*” Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe. Have it done by half past two.  
Stitch it up and stitch it down and see with who the shoe is found.”*

*In the process a shoe was passed up and down the row of desks.*

*The little boy in Holland who put his finger in the dyke so his homeland would not be flooded was another story read to us, as was Uncle Remus and The Water Babies and other fables. Scripture class was held once a week. There we used to bellow out this song:*

*“Build on the rock, the rock that ever stands.  
Build on the rock and not upon the sands.  
You may not fear the storms or the earthquakes shock.  
All you have to do is build on the rock*

*Another popular song we used to like was this one: “To-day I feel so happy, so happy, so happy. I don’t know why I’m happy; I only know I am!”*

*Believe it or not, Mr Carradice used to come around to the classes with a clean white handkerchief on the ready to pull out any wobbly teeth, but I can’t recall whether any kids availing themselves of the offer. In First Class we had slates, but Second Class had ruled. We were taught legible copperplate writing. In the playground the boys played marbles, chasing and scuffling, the usual boyish energies, while the girls played by the pinetrees, sweeping the pine needles to make the floor of a cubbyhouse. From the many feet that had trodden the school grounds there was very little grass coverage, only some tufty Parramatta grass and little else, but plenty of surface pebbles to graze knees, if one toppled over in play.*

*The end of year picnic in the school grounds was a memorable event, each child coming to school with a mug on a string around their neck. Raspberry syrup was served from big enamel jugs. There were cakes and lollies, both home-made or bought.*

*On September 25 1929, the Governor of New South Wales, Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair, visited our school. All the kids were all assembled around a 'dressed' Australia. Photographs were taken, possibly by a Herald photographer. The Governor stood by the railing of the verandah and was most interesting in his speech to us. With him were Mr Carradice and other dignitaries. The children were gathered around the map of Australia. It was a memorable day.*

### **THE DAY THE GOVERNOR VISITED THE SCHOOL**



It is September 25 1929. The Governor of New South Wales, Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair, with Headmaster Mr Carradice and President of the P & C Association Hugh Christie amid pupils and parents of Marsfield Public School. The Governor's interest is arrested by a playground map of Australia depicting products bound for overseas and the ships that carry them. He studies the graphic story of Australia told on the playground map, of the explorers, the whalers, the squatters, the miners Scott's journey to the South Pole, the products and exports of each state illustrated by miniature bales of wool, loads of timber, pieces of coal, ears of wheat and so on. Mr Carradice's visual geography also showed the comparison of Australia's area with other countries and the All-Red-Route from Australia to England via the Suez canal. This was part of Mr Carradice's novel but effective visual geography method. — Photo by courtesy of Betty Brown (nee Christie).

*My Mum grew up with her cousin Lenore Tunbridge. They were in the same class at Marsfield Public, where Mum became dux of the school in 1922. The Honour Board bearing her name is now in the North Ryde School Museum. Like most ex-pupils of the school Mum and Lenore had wonderful memories of their school days and had the greatest respect for their famous Headmaster, Mr Carradice. Even 50 years after they had left school, they organised a reunion in this house celebrating the worthy contribution made to their lives by this special teacher. I wonder how many teachers are so revered by their students half a century after their leaving school. Very few, I would believe.*

### **BACK TO LETTIE'S REMINISCENCES**

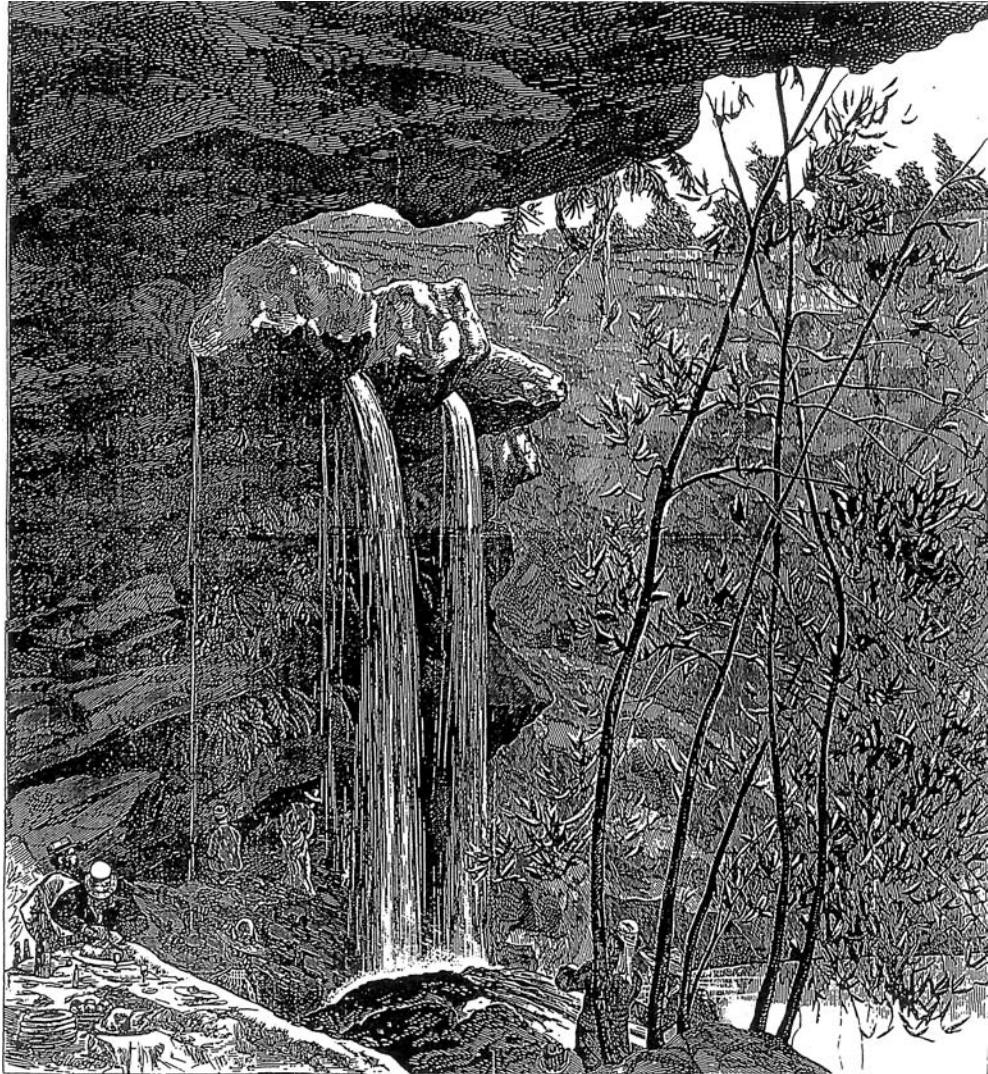
*The class in summer was often disturbed by a cicada in some boy's pocket. There were several kinds: Yellow Mondays, Greengrocers, Floury Bakers and Black Princes. Where did these names come from? Christmas beetles were another diversion, though they didn't drum. The purpose of one nature lesson is still unclear to me: Bring your own razorblade and snail and watch it crawl along the blade edge!*

*The Headmaster's wife, Mrs Carradice used to say he hoped we would make him a shirt one day. One girl was a left-hander and found it difficult to sew, but we were fascinated with her. Between the weather shed and the Girls' Toilet was the vigoro pitch, which was reasonably flat.*

*Further down the hill was the boys' cricket pitch. Towards the sandpit was the area for rounders played with a broom handle. Sports equipment was very scarce. Skipping was very popular: High Waters, Low Waters, Peppers, two ropes turned in opposition to make a very fast skip. Running in and skip one, then out, with a line of girls chasing through, each in turn, was another game. Alas! Miss Baker ran in one side, as I did the other side, the collision resulting in us both down in the dust. Another game was with sticks laid on the ground then jump to the finishing line. The last stick was periodically shifted further, creating a longer jump each time. The boys used to play saddle-me-nag and cockalorum before the teachers arrived at school.*

*My sister is in High School studying Shakespeare, the **immoral** bard.*

*Otherwise it was cricket and marbles. Most boys had a catapult, but this was not allowed at school. There were plenty of birds about and there was the Gould League of bird lovers to which many of us belonged. On Wattle day, August 1 in those days, we would march down to Buckham Falls and hopefully learn a little about Nature. The Falls were surrounded by Christmas Bells, Flannel Flowers. A large stretch of rock overhung the cave abounding in Aboriginal carvings of fish.*



Buckham Falls, a re-production of an engraving by George Collingridge. — *The Illustrated News*, 21/11/1885. Here we see picknickers at the delightful Falls. At the bottom left two men are standing by the festive fare set out on a convenient rock, in front of which an Aboriginal rock carving is to be seen. Nearby a couple is inspecting native paintings under the canopy of an overhanging rock. On the right another couple are contemplating the splendour of the waterfall. A glory of the past.

#### SOME GEMS FROM PUPILS' NOTEBOOKS

Bass and Flinders *circumcised* Australia with Tom Thumb.

The Pope lives in the *Vacuum*.

My parents favour the reintroduction of *capital* punishment in the schools.

A *mandolin* is a high-ranking Chinese official.

Thanks, Uncle, for the pig you gave us. It was extremely kind and *just like you*.

The natives in Africa are often very hungry.

When they beat on their *tum-tums*, they can be heard for miles around.

A *juvenile* is a tributary of the Nile.

The Scots speak a funny language called *Garlic*.



Buckham Falls at the north of Shrimptons Creek was an ideal place for picnics, but sadly no more. The march of time has trampled over them, their beauty lost forever since the advent of sewerage in the district. — A Rex Hazlewood photo.

*On March 16, 1932, Children's Day, before the Sydney Harbour Bridge was officially opened, the school marched across the bridge. There were no vehicles allowed there until after midday. Although the minimum age was eight, Mr Carradice kindly promised to keep his eye on my young brother, Peter, as he was just a few days off his eighth birthday. We were escorted by Mr Carradice and Miss Baker. We left the train at Wynyard. There was fine misty rain. No worries about raincoats, as few of us owned one. My strongest memory was that of seeing the sea through the expansion gaps in the roadway. The night the bridge was officially opened, the fireworks could be seen from Lane Cove road in North Ryde. The fireworks were made in our area by Howard Brothers whose boys attended our school.*

*About this time too swimming classes started at Myer's Baths on Vimiera Road. They were eventually closed after an epileptic man drowned there. In the 1920s on hot sunny days Marsfielders at leisure had few opportunities to cool off in pools other than in the Lane Cove River.*

While mainly boys indulged in skinny-dipping locally, many adults and their families repaired to the Eastwood Baths in Vimiera Road, Eastwood. *These facilities were officially opened by Alderman Francis Myers. The project, on the northern side of Vimiera Road practically opposite present-day Vanimo Place, had been completed by Mr Myers, his friends and employees. The vicinity of Vimiera Road had never seen a bigger crowd. The pool measuring 140 ft long and 60 ft wide contained fresh water supplied by the Sydney Water Board. The entrance fee was threepence (two cents) for adults and a penny for children. \* The Northern Despatch January 30 1931.* This was a most enterprising move at a time when there were few such pools around. On hot summer days while coastal dwellers sought the beach, inlanders just sizzled in the suburbs. Eric Schuberg (born 1919) of Epping recalls attending there to cool off and having to go into a puddle of Condyl's crystals before being allowed to enter the pool. This facility was a grand gift to an inland community, but was not destined to serve the people for long.

In his memoirs Corunna Road resident Edward Harold Munro (1919-1999) wrote: *Not too many people know there was a public swimming pool where Nos 24A, 26, 26A and 26B Vimiera Road are now. From memory it was built in the early 1930s in an old quarry opened by my grandfather, A. W. Small. It was an olympic size pool, 50 yards by 25 yards. The quarry was abandoned when the rock strata slipped too far into the ground, leaving too much overburden to be shifted. The floor of the pool was one big sheet of stone. On the right of the pool, at the road end, it was about two and a half metres deep and on the left about one and three quarters deep. At the other end it was about one and a quarter metres deep on the right and about 70 centimetres on the left. The pool only operated for a few years, because people started getting ear, nose and throat infections, due to the poor water quality. People would go to the doctor and the first question he would ask was "Have you been to the local pool lately?" There was a low springboard and one not two metres high. Each year there would be a swimming carnival, with the main event being the State Diving Team. There were no refinements such as starting blocks or lane markers. They just dived in and went for their lives. The shallow end was a bit of a problem, but as it was only the locals competing, it was a lot of fun. The seating was primitive, the "grandstand" being several old telegraph poles leaned up to the top of the quarry to support rough old planks that formed the seats. There were two poles on each side of the pool to provide rather dim lighting at night. \* Supplied by courtesy of Annette Ingleton. Cec Frost (born Eastwood 1918) also recalls the scene: It was immensely popular at first, but its maintenance was difficult. The filter simply recycled the water, which was generally green in colour. Unfortunately there were also acts of sabotage. Mindless vandals would secretly toss in bottles and other rubbish, even dead cats. It was a case of a few destroying the pleasure of the majority. There were complaints of ear, nose and throat problems. It was too much for Frank, a very decent man. The pool was closed and emptied — such a shame. People are destroyers.*

*In Mr Carradice's time the end of the year was celebrated with the burning of the cane. The pallbearers were the big boys creating such a commotion of weeping and wailing, worthy of an Oscar, as it was carried to the incinerator, a 44-gallon drum — no fancy ones in those days! It was hoped that it would be a long time into the new school year before a replacement cane was put into action. At the end of 1932 Mr Carradice left the school to teach at Jenolan Caves. Before leaving he promised he would have each year's Dux of the school for a week-end at the Caves. It was probably a good incentive to everyone to strive for this.*

*In front of our school, skirted with native flowers, ran Sebastapol Road, later Spooner Highway and now Epping Road. It was then virtually impassable for traffic except walking — stones everywhere, washaways and large ruts. When the Highway was built and a double-decker bus ran from Epping to the city, the district began to open up. In 1934 the Duke of Gloucester came to Australia and we attended a school display at the Showground o Sydney Cricket Ground. It was the first time I had seen dancing, physical culture displays and group formations with so many children — very impressive. The Duke rode around the perimeter, our first Royal sighting.*

*On Wednesdays the trainee priests from nearby Curzon Hall used to walk two abreast down Balaclava Road towards the bush, what to do we never found out, but I suppose it was for exercise and meditation. Then afterwards they came back to Curzon Hall where, along the fence in Agincourt Road, there grew large Bunya Pines that dropped huge cones gathered eagerly by the boys. Back at school Q.C. [Qualifying Certificate] examination time came along. Several of us girls passed for Hornsby High School, but were sent to Hornsby Domestic Science School.*

#### **ANOTHER PUPIL WHO LOVED MARSFIELD SCHOOL**

*Dorris Jeffs (nee Hearne born 1917) recalls: From 1921 I lived with my family on an eight acre property which is now the Eastwood Rugby Union sports grounds. That was opposite Jacobs' poultry farm. What a great childhood we spent there: orchards all around, plenty of room and fresh air. We used to roam the bush where the Macquarie Uni is to-day. The changes that have taken place since then are incredible. We had a good life, plenty to eat from our orchard and vegies, milk cream and butter from our cow. Our clothes were hand-me-downs, but we were happy enough. We never had any money to speak of. Dad used to grow lots of strawberries to sell. My sister and brothers and I used to get paid a halfpenny [half a cent] in the afternoons cleaning off the snails and slugs from the strawberries and packing them ready for sale. Dad also specialised in growing sweet peas for sale. On Empire night we would have a huge bonfire on our property. All the neighbours would come. It was the high point of the year for us kids. We all loved Marsfield and especially our school. I was there in the days of the famous Headmaster, Mr Carradice.*

*That day in 1929 when the Governor paid a visit to the school I remember so well. We used to hang up our hats and bags on hooks outside the classroom. Well, the Governor came along and hung up his hat — guess where? On top of my bag. I felt some honour about this. As kids we called the Headmaster Carrie or Old Carrie. His wife was the sewing teacher. She was very nice and I was inspired by her to make a nice little frock for my young sister. It won first prize. Now, when, as usual every year, Mr Carradice asked us pupils to write down what we hoped to be doing when we were 21, I wrote that it would be to do with sewing. My prediction didn't work out at all. I never took to sewing one bit. I was then working in the printing trade. In my youth I so enjoyed life in Marsfield. I never thought I would be returning in my old age, but here I am to-day at the Willandra Retirement Village on the Epping Highway and still loving Marsfield.*  
\* Interview with author April 16 2002.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR KEEN PUPILS**

*Marsfield Public School: a Sacred Site* by Yooralia.  
*Traffic on Lane Cove Road in 1920* by Orson Carriage  
*Indispensable Help for All Scholars* by Dick Shunary  
*Make Money After Leaving School* by Maximilian Ayre  
*Dux of the School* by Hedda De Classe  
*My Progress At School* by C. Myra Port  
*My Most Embarrassing Moment* by Lucy Lastik

**PAYING HOMAGE TO A GREAT AUSTRALIAN**

Molly Gorman (born at Marsfield in 1911) and a pupil of Marsfield Public School recalls her schooldays: *Our Headmaster, Mr Carradice, was born a Yorkshireman but he loved Australia. He did not hesitate to sing the praises of this country's achievements and those of its heroes. In September 1922 famous author and poet, Henry Lawson died. On the occasion of his State funeral Mr Carradice took the pupils of 5th and 6th classes to Sydney to attend the service at St Andrews Cathedral. Aside from the significance of the occasion, the excursion for us rural Marsfielders was quite exciting — I would say it was a privilege. In Italian there is a saying; Chi trova un amico, trova un tesoro. (One who finds a friend, finds a treasure). Living proof of the above philosophy is Zuma Carrara (born 1915 in Italy) and who came with her family to Marsfield in 1925. At this time Zuma was of school age but completely without English. Few Australians could appreciate this situation — the inability to understand both children and teachers, the frustration of being unable to communicate with others at work and play, the loneliness and sadness accruing from these circumstances, the difficulty of learning a foreign language in the midst of a foreign environment. Zuma counts herself lucky to have survived these dilemmas. It was through the help of a teacher, Gwen Keevil, at Marsfield School. The latter who took Zuma under her wing, taught her far beyond the call of duty and encouraged her to strive for language mastery.*

She even took her protegee to her home for the weekend. Finally both teacher and pupil gained success. In the process they became good friends — so good that the friendship lasted long, long after schooldays. Zuma remained devoted to Mrs Keevil, visiting her regularly right up to her death.

More fortunate was Zuma's brother, Enzo Carrara, who was born at Marsfield in 1929. He grew up with English and therefore felt completely at home both at school and in the cosmopolitan district around him. He recalls some of his time in Marsfield: *My parents became naturalised Australians. Later Dad purchased five acres on Agincourt Road opposite the Town Hall. In 1943 the property cost £3000. One of my best memories is at the age of eight or nine years racing home after school to be allowed to drive Tom McGrath's horse and cart around — a great thrill. As I look back, I only have fond memories of school and life in Marsfield.* \* Interview with author June 2002.

#### **NEW SETTLERS PICKING UP THE AUSSIE LANGUAGE**

Many of the post-war arrivals from Italy, having no education in the English language, found themselves too busy making a living to go to Evening English Classes or free correspondence courses. From occasional intercourse with Australians, they inevitably picked up the most frequently used words as the following verse recorded after a severe drought in the mid 1950s may explain:

*Mars-a-field's a-blooda rotten, da country blooda dry.  
Me never make a fortune, no matter how me try.  
One-a-day she blooda cold; next-a-day she blooda hot;  
Den come da blooda thunderstorm and drown da blooda lot.*

They were barefooted days for boys in particular. Any new boy arriving in shoes soon learned to come in bare feet just to be like the rest of his peers.

#### **SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD**

Lettie St Julian (nee Krix born Marsfield 1922-2007) recalls that early in the school year Mr Carradice used to send a boy to take a stick from a quince tree nearby. This would serve as the instrument of torture for wayward pupils. The wise Headmaster no doubt carried out this ritual as a deterrent to bad behaviour. At the end of the year when good spirits reigned all round, there was a fun event when the cane was ceremoniously carried to the incinerator and burned. Tom Mahon (born 1917) has reason to remember these occasions:

*I was the bad boy of my time. I was often on the receiving end of the stick. I used to wag school a lot and whenever I was found out, I would get a good hiding from my father. So I copped it at home and school. The last day of the school year was the one day that wouldn't wag it. It was my pleasure, as the bad boy of the school with the greatest number of cuts to lead the procession for the burning of the cane.*

Tom Mahon absented himself from school because he preferred to become an axeman: *My Dad was a top woodchopper. The whole family was mad about woodchopping, except for one brother who was a musician. Dad had had plenty of physical labour when he was a cane cutter in Queensland. That was when every stalk of cane was cut by hand. I followed in his footsteps. To earn a crust I did lots of manual work and was very fit. I used to enter all the competitions held around the area. They were mainly at the rear of the pubs in Epping, Eastwood and Pymble. When I was still going to school and I often wagged it, I would go down into the bush at the river end of Balaclava Road. It was near Geordie Small's trotting track. There I would find Leo Appo, later world champion axeman. He would be slogging away at the timber he had felled, cutting it up as firewood for the bakeries around the district. First time I was there, he recognised me: "Aren't you the lad who delivers the Labour Daily to me?" he asked. It was me all right. I was often there and he was always anxious that I would be late for school at Marsfield. I wasn't worried, because I used to wag school as much as I could get away with it. Anyway I used to watch Leo and get inspired by his skill.*

**A TEACHER EXTRAORDINAIRE WHO LOVED MARSFIELD SCHOOL**

The following is an unsolicited tribute to retiring Headmaster, Mr Carradice, written by a very experienced Chief Inspector of the Department of Education on September 5 1932: *I spent an interesting hour in your school on Thursday last — your last day of service. In all my experience I never saw more enthusiasm or a better spirit of co-operation among teachers and pupils. Someone has said that education is the development of the best that is in us, so that we may enjoy the best that is outside of us. Apparently the statement fits exactly your interpretation of the term.*

*Apart from the scholastic attainments of your pupils (and these are undoubted) you have succeeded in conducting your schools in a thoroughly educational way. No doubt Marsfield was your crowning success and your name will be remembered affectionately there for many years to come. Now you are one of the 'boys of the old brigade'. May you enjoy to the full your well-earned leisure. At the same time you will, I feel sure, continue to be busy in some good service. Wishing you and yours all happiness in the future.*

*Yours sincerely, B. C. Harkness.*

In December 1956 a brick bell-tower was built in the playground in memory of the remarkable Mr Carradice, who departed the world in August that year.



Plaque in memory of revered Headmaster, John Alfred Carradice. — Photo by courtesy of Betty Brown (nee Christie).

**CORRECTION OF GRAMMAR:**

Teacher: *I am beautiful. Tell me what tense that is.* Pupil: *Past tense, Miss.*

**SCHOOL FOR A SPECIAL BOY:** John Lane (born 1930) recalls some of his school experiences: *I started school in the Infants with teacher, Mrs Keevil, who was extremely kind to me, since I was just out of hospital with polio-myelitis and wore a leg-iron. Nevertheless, she encouraged my participation in physical activities including skipping on one leg. Every second Monday I had to attend the Children's Hospital at Camperdown for treatment, which meant I missed out on that day's intensive attention to spelling. By Friday, without any assistance to help me make up for these absences, I was affected mentally and losing confidence. My teacher, Mr Wright, made no effort to help me fill this gap. At times I could hardly walk, but tried to carry on nevertheless.*

*I did enjoy two things in particular: singing and weaving. When World War II came along, parents and children set about digging air-raid trenches. I also worked with them. We used to have air-raid drills, but, in 1943, we had record downpours of rain which flooded the trenches. In that era we saw a plane coming over and became worried. Fortunately it was just an Aussie bi-plane.*

*I recall learning all the tables up to twelve times in Third Class. When the partition between Third and Fourth Class was removed, we enjoyed community singing: Scottish and Irish songs, also English patriotic songs. On Empire Day, before we broke up for a half-day holiday to go and check the traditional bonfire, we had running races after the usual commemoration of the Empire.*

*In the race in which I took part, I was allowed a liberal handicap because of my leg — too much, it seems, because I won the race. Most kids treated me quite normally, which was good for me. I had some good mates. In soccer I played goalie, very appropriate for me. I did well at cricket, which we played at the bottom of the playground. One sports day Mr Wright walked us from school all the way to West Epping School to play cricket at the back of the school. We had to walk all the way back. Most boys were bare-footed.*

*An Italian boy, who had been sent down from the local Convent School, was not well received, because, in a row with another lad, he pulled out a penknife to attack him. I intervened, by jumping on his back and slapping him. This we never reported to the teacher. He must have settled down after that. One caning of four strokes I had after simply walking across the playground. I never know why I was so punished.*

**OLD CHINESE PROVERB FOR THOUGHTFUL PUPILS WHO HAVE SUFFERED THE CANE**

*Pain makes a man think. Thought makes a man wise.*

*Wisdom makes life endurable.*



While the girls are inside sewing the boys are outside engaged in gardening. The poles in the background are in Balaclava Road. This area is now occupied by home units. — Photo by courtesy of Betty Brown (nee Christie).

*Geography lessons were often held in the playground with our standing on the Map of Australia and then travelling the world to England over near the Girls' toilet. I recall re-painting parts of the map and attending to the garden near the map, on which the Headmaster was very keen. I even enjoyed gardening on Friday afternoons.*

*In Fifth Class on Friday mornings, however, with my aversion to Spelling, I asked whether I could go out and weed the garden with lovely roses. Marsfield was truly a country school with only three rooms, but I liked school and later went on to Hornsby Technical School, where, in my final year, I was chosen as Captain of the School. This may account for my becoming a teacher myself after eight years in the general work force. After teaching in Primary Schools, one-teacher and two-teacher schools, I obtained my University degree and Diploma in Fine Arts and taught in High Schools until retirement.*

#### **THE DEMISE OF MARSFIELD SCHOOL**

Enrolment peaked at 508 in 1957, but with the establishment of new schools in the area, Eastwood Heights and Kent Road, numbers dropped dramatically at Marsfield. No doubt many parents with new enrollees preferred the newer facilities at these schools rather than the old portables at Marsfield.

Lettie St Julian (nee Krix born Marsfield 1922-2007) *As an adult I returned often to my old school and cried when the Department of Education announced its closure. A lot of us ex-pupils fought hard for its retention, but I really think that the school rooms being all timber portables, would one day have to be replaced by structures more substantial and its situation on the Epping Highway would bring the Department of Education a very high price for the land it occupied.*



Ex-pupil, Lettie St Julian, in pensive mood about her last day at this school.



The above photos at Marsfield Public School in 1989 signify the end of an era. Despite the regret of local residents and ex-pupils who loved their school, Marsfield was to cease operations that year. With the great spirit which had always characterised the school, ex-pupils, young and old, joyfully joined in a gala reunion to celebrate their attachment to the old institution.

In May 1990, sad to relate, some vandals set fire to three classrooms. Fortunately, memorabilia of the old school remain in the splendid museum at North Ryde School.

With thieves I consort, with the vilest, in short,  
I'm quite at my ease in depravity;  
Yet all divines use me and savants can't lose me,  
For I am the centre of gravity.

**What am I?**

[Answer appears at the bottom of this page.]

So now it's time to sing once more that

### **TIME-HONORED CHANT ON THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**

*One more day and we will be out of the gates of misery.  
No more pencils, no more books; no more teachers' ugly looks.  
No more Latin, no more French; no more sitting on a hard board bench.*

and by extension nearing the last page of this section

*No more typing, no more tales,  
No more said of woe and wails.*

### **JEST ONCE MORE**

*How do you like your teacher, dear? — Oh, she's all right, I suppose, but, boy, is she bigoted! — Bigoted? In what way? — Well, she's got the idea that words can only be spelled her way.*

A good Christian farmer had reason to punish his son. In typical fashion the father said: *That hurt me more than it hurt you, my lad! I punished you merely to show my love for you. That's all right*, sobbed the son, *but it's a good thing for you that I ain't big enough to return your love!*

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*Solution to question, What am I? :*

*I am the letter v.*

## PLAIN TALK TO TEACHERS

How often do we hear a child say? *School's all right, but I don't like the teacher.* How often does a teacher know his/her subject, but cannot successfully impart his/her knowledge. Getting the message across depends on many factors. It is not just the work you prepare, not the materials and the devices you use, but most essentially the communicative effect you yourself have upon the human beings in your charge.

The ideal recipe for effective communication in education has never been written, nor will it ever be fully written. Nevertheless, there exist perennial principles that are worthy of note, constant study and implementation.

The task of dealing with any group is never easy. The difficulty for the teacher generally varies in proportion to the size of the group. Just think of the huge sizes of classes in many of the foregoing *Tales*. Just think of the load of a teacher in a one-teacher school. However, the moment you begin treating the group as a group of individuals is the moment when the gate to successful communication swings open. Dealing with every individual in a group takes time and energy, study and sympathy — no easy task! Yet, it is the attitude of doing so that rates high with the group. Little things like calling pupils by their first name, offering them privacy in the return of tests and assignments, never publicly exposing their weaknesses or ridiculing them in front of the group, interviewing them in private, inviting them to approach you outside of the group, thus showing your respect for the dignity of the individual.

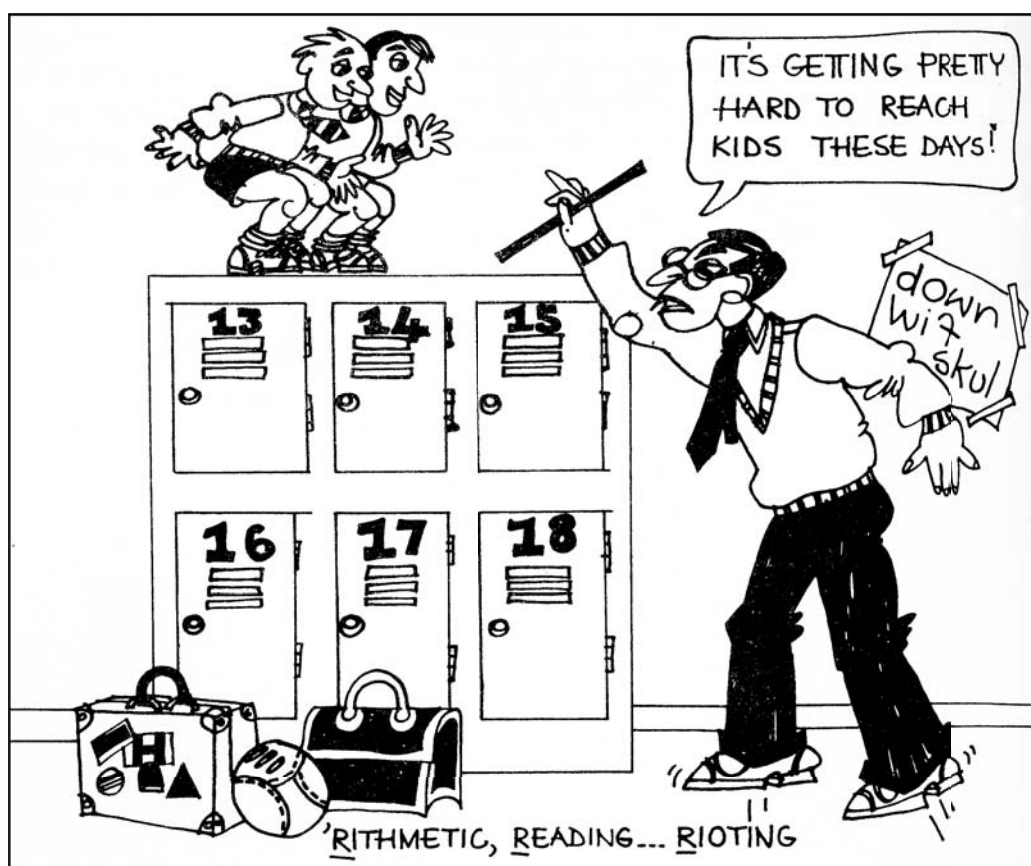
Although each pupil will not and cannot always receive the same time and care from you, the very knowledge that there exists an equal opportunity to seek your time and attention if necessary is normally sufficient in itself for the group to develop favorable attitudes towards you and your communication. The sense of fairness is paramount. You can be strict, yet fair and earn respect, but if you are strict and unfair, you will be hated.

Remember, too, that the problems and difficulties that arise from the group can be best solved by handling the individuals most involved. Teachers who over-moralise to the whole group will surely lose attention: "*None of you has any manners ... I don't know ... the young people of to-day ... Why, in my day ...*". Teachers who have alienated the group have lost their chance to successfully communicate with it. Apply, therefore, any blame to those to whom it belongs. Never make a group suffer because of a minority of miscreants. Teachers, leaders, administrators, bosses, all need constantly to remind themselves that they are dealing with individuals, and that the morale of the group is the most important factor of all in the processes of communication.

**QUICK QUIZ:** What starts with *t* and ends in *t* ? A teapot.

A high morale will not result from your setting out to please everyone nor from seeking popularity for yourself. Over-familiarity, likewise, achieves results the very opposite to its aims. Sympathetic, yet firm discipline must be an essential part of any teacher's bid for successful communication. Since the dawn of civilisation it has been man's inclination to develop order, not just for selfish reasons, but also to promote harmony in relations with others. Preservation of harmony for all, however, entails disciplining of some. Discipline actually means training. Children need it. Adults need to maintain it. Without it there is chaos and unhappiness.

Society at large is never ideal; nor is the school society. You will be beset by many a challenge, many a problem for which you are unprepared. Some will call for some chastisement of the perpetrator. Punishments and rewards need to be meted out with the greatest discretion. Admittedly, that last word is one of the most difficult in the English language to define and understand. Punishments should be graded: a small misdemeanour needs only a small penalty; a medium transgression — a medium penalty ... The withdrawal of a privilege is often one of the best forms of punishment.



It is easy to regard these points as self-evident. Implementing them is not so easy. It will mean hard work, constant and time-consuming labour. It is a complex task, but success in getting your message across, surely the aim of every teacher, is reward enough in itself.

**IN SCHOOL AS IN LIFE THERE ARE  
UPS  
AND  
DOWNS**

But now, it's time once again to sing the children's time-honoured chant on the last day of school:



*One more day and we will be out of the gates of misery.  
No more pencils, no more books; no more teachers' ugly looks.  
No more Latin, no more French; no more sitting on a hard board bench.*

Meanwhile:

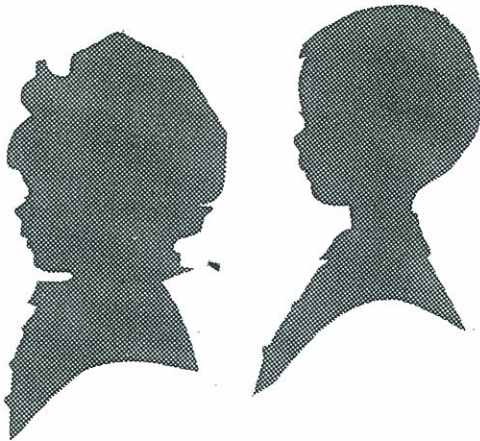
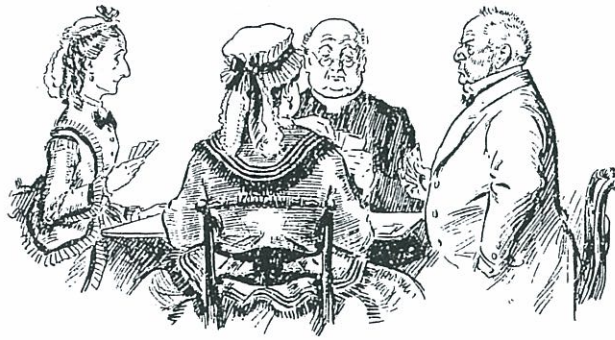








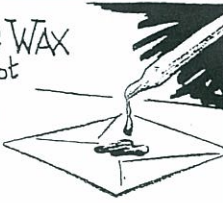

*No more kiddies, no more wails,  
That's the end of these old tales.*

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**SCHOOL IS CLOSED.**

There is only one thing permanent in life — change. In my life of eight and a half decades I have seen many changes, changes of all kinds. We all vary in our knowledge and talents, but one thing is certain: we never stop learning. I freely omit that I have never learned to *type right*. I have toiled typing this work with but two fingers, while my young ten-year-old neighbour, already an expert on the computer, has helped me technically when I was in need.



|  <h1>WRONG AGAIN!</h1>                     |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  <p><b>INDIAN INK</b><br/>comes<br/>from<br/><b>CHINA!</b></p>  |  <p><b>RICE PAPER</b><br/>is made<br/>of <b>PITH</b>—<br/>—<b>not Rice!</b></p> |  <p><b>MARMALADE</b><br/>should be<br/>made from<br/><b>QUINCES!</b><br/>(PORRIGUE)<br/>MARMELD—A Quince.</p> |
|  <p><b>AN IDIOT</b><br/>is only<br/>"an ordinary<br/>person employed<br/>in a public office."<br/>(So the Dictionary says!)</p> |  <p><b>SEALING WAX</b><br/>does not<br/>contain<br/><b>WAX!</b></p>             |  <p>The <b>SHEETS</b><br/>on a boat<br/>are <b>ROPES</b><br/><b>not Sails!</b></p>                            |

## **NORTH RYDE PUBLIC SCHOOL INITIALLY CALLED CITY VIEW**

From January 1878

MOTTO: *UTILE DULCI* [PLEASURE THROUGH USEFULNESS]

The first school in present-day North Ryde area in 1878 was called City View, because parts of Sydney such as St Andrews Cathedral could be seen from this area. A year or two later the name was changed to North Ryde. Sarah Wicks lost her husband, Robert, in 1837, but in 1838 she married William Watts. After her death, her son Robert Wicks took over the 60-acre farm. In 1877 he donated one acre of the property for the establishment of City View Public School, an adjoining acre to St Johns Church. Wicks Road (formerly Wicks lane), bearing his name was another of his donations to the community.



The progress of Sydney Harbour Bridge under construction was regularly viewed by inhabitants of this area in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Despite occasional suggestions for a new name, residents have fervently clung to the name of North Ryde, never officially so named, but so called because of its distance from Top Ryde. The establishment of a Post Office in the area as North Ryde consolidated the name. In 1907 the adjoining Municipality of Marsfield became Eastwood and in 1948 it was merged with Ryde. Both of these northern areas retained their rural nature longer than any part of the City of Ryde, but post World War II needs saw the open country transformed into suburbia, schools, university, retirement homes and technology parks. As early as 1865 the residents of North Ryde had vainly asked for a Public School. In 1874, when a further plea was made, the Local Education Board in Ryde objected strongly against the establishment of a school there on the grounds that its own school would drop in numbers.

Since children were walking two or miles to Ryde School and since Robert Wicks had offered an acre of his land for the school, the Council of Education began to look more favourably on the petitions. In February 1876 it was recorded that 41 pupils from North Ryde were travelling to Ryde Public, 10 to the Roman Catholic School at Ryde and 10 to the Church of England at Ryde. There were 25 other school-age children not attending school at all. When a map of the North Ryde area showing the families resident there, Headmaster of Ryde Public School, George Hunt, was quick to try and protect his school numbers, by writing in and pointing out that 15 names on the City View's map were persons either unmarried or just married without children or married ones with grown-up children. The objection was quashed by the authorities and plans were proceeded with to start City View Public School.

The Council of Education had budgeted £800 for a building for 54 pupils. All but one of six tenders were over £1000 (the highest being £1364). The lowest of £739 by A. D. Young was £739. In May 1877 when the building was half erected Alex Adams, Secretary of the Local School Committee pointed out that the government had just gazetted a new road which would pass through the middle of the school. The error was remedied and Mr Young continued his work until October 1877, when he abandoned the contract and left the Colony. He had had wet weather problems, the horses not being able to cart the heavy stone. He also found it difficult to get carters to draw bricks *unless at extravagant rates*. The builder's surety, however, agreed to complete the building.

In December 1877, anticipating the official opening of City View Public School, Mr Adams contacted the Council of Education, inviting the Secretary and his officers to be present: *Mr Cox will meet the 1 p.m. steamer with his dog-cart [!] and take you back in time for the 20 past 6 or half past 8 steamer from Ryde*. The Council replied that none would be attending, *the pressure of official duties depriving the Secretary the pleasure of accepting the invitation*. The first Headmaster was Mr Charles Crew, a young man with six children. The school fees were set at 9d a week for one pupil, 1/3 for two, 1/6 for three, and 1/9 for four or more in the one family.

Already in March 1878 it was discovered that countless little local inhabitants had a great hunger for education: both the school building and the teacher's residence were being occupied by termites. They were deterred by the application of kerosene and infested logs lying about the grounds were removed and burned. Incensed at the invasion of their territory an army of the so called white ants proceeded to infiltrate the floorboards of the teacher's residence and were not discovered until the boards gave way and had to be replaced. Though defeated in battle, the termites closed ranks and were back at war in 1930.

On September 9 1879 the Local School Board successfully asked to change the name of the school from City View to North Ryde, being a more general and correct designation. Mr Crew died in August 1880 leaving a widow and six little children. His temporary replacement was paid a salary of £144 per annum. Lewis Henry was eventually appointed.

Since the school is sited on Cox's Road, it is perhaps pertinent to relate some of the background of Cox's farm.

#### **COX'S FARM: THE PRIDE OF NORTH RYDE**

In 1882 the 21-acre farm, orchard and vineyard of **William Cox** (1839-1910) was so remarkable that a reporter from the *Sydney Mail* paid a visit and described it in the following article: *We illustrate in this issue one of the many pretty farms which that romantic suburb of Ryde embraces within its boundaries. Those who travel from this city [Sydney] to Parramatta by steamer have opportunities to admire many scenes; but it is not until the country back of the rocky shore is traversed, especially that along the north shore, that a fair idea of the richness of the land can be entertained. For miles back gardens and orchards, with soil of remarkable fertility, orange groves, vineyards and orchards, each of which yielding handsome returns, are owned by prosperous yeomen, who toil industriously, and are well remunerated for such toil. Sydney affords a handy market for their fruits, and when the local market is glutted, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand are available. In the first rank of these yeomen may be placed Mr Joseph Cox. Mr Cox left the Garden of England (Kent) about a quarter of a century ago and after 11 years searching successfully for gold with his brother purchased the farm in Ryde — a block of 21 acres — about three and a half miles from Ryde Wharf, in that part known as North Ryde. The brothers paid £1125 for this piece of land with a cottage and other improvements. Time has proved that it was a bargain. Soon after the purchase the brothers dissolved partnership. William went to the other side of Parramatta River. Joseph pinned his faith to Ryde, and by this time he had taken a partner for life. He, like others, proved that fruit-growing, if properly conducted, is profitable as well as health-giving. He has a happy wife, six children with cheeks blooming like the rosy apples grown hard by, a house which might well grace the demesne of a millionaire, and 21 acres of land in perfect tilth; seven acres under vines, seven under oranges, apples, peaches, plums and nectarines and seven under pasture.*

*Mr Cox is one who knows that 14 acres well cultivated are worth so many hundred of acres merelt tickled. He spares no labour, nor is he chary in the matter of outlay to afford his trees and vines fair play. The soil is a light loam which requires feeding and Mr Cox supplies the food. Of the seven acres of vines five were planted 18 years ago and two were put in since Mr Cox bought the farm. Black Hambro is the principal variety of grape grown there. A small plot is devoted to Sweetwater and about one quarter of an acre to grapes for wine.*

*The principal trade from the farm is derived from the Black Hambro grapes such as were recently packed for England. Between January and April each year Mr Cox sends his grapes to market. [After the Gladesville bridge had been built across the Parramatta River in 1881, local farmers found it more expedient to transport their produce directly to the Sydney markets by horse and cart rather than by taking them to Ryde Wharf and sending them by boat. The new route meant that the producers could eliminate some intermediaries and thereby save money.] His crop is packed in workmanlike style and brings the top price. Thus the five acres have brought a return equal to £210 per annum. When grapes are out, oranges with loquats afford employment, and after these plums, apples, peaches and nectarines keep the bank account moving. Apples are not as profitable as grapes and oranges, but they fill a gap in the year and tide the time until the next grape season. Mr Cox employs about two farm hands. These, with his family, keep the 14 acres in order. Once in every two or three years, directly after the grapes are off, the vines are manured at an actual cost of about £14 per acre. Bonedust, dried blood, guano [the excrement of sea-fowl found in islands off Peru or fertilizer from fish], dead leaves and stable manure form the compost. Last year Mr Cox sent 530 cases (large, each with 14 dozen) of oranges to market. The average price per case was four shillings to ten shillings per case, counting from 10 to 30 dozen each.*

*The house is a three storey stone building of handsome design and Mr Cox took fully half a share in the actual work of its erection. The stone was quarried about half a mile from the farm and it is plain that the dressing and carving were skilfully done. It would be difficult to find a more comfortable home. A well-kept flower garden fronts the house, which is furnished in a style far above the ordinary bush home. There is a well-kept carriage drive, egress and ingress being through handsome iron gates, swung from stone pillars. Opposite those there is, on the Cox's road, the Church of England, a wooden structure, and the Public School, a handsome brick building. About 50 children attend this school. At the back of the farm is the road which leads across the head of the Lane Cove River to the North Shore, and in front from the verandah of the house, there is, on a clear day, an excellent view of Sydney, the Town Hall of which is about eight miles. By road the farm is double that distance from the same point.*

*Mr and Mrs Cox are an hospitable couple; they have many metropolitan friends who enjoy many a holiday at the farm, which has been recently christened "Pomona". [Pomona is the Roman goddess of fruit.] In the "pleasant vintage time" a walk through the vine rows is enjoyable in a double sense, and when the fruit has been tasted, a good draught of wine may follow, for Mr Cox makes some good sound wine. His press, still and collar repay inspection. In fact, Pomona is a model establishment which is well worthy of a visit. \* The Sydney Mail Saturday April 1 1882.*



The way it was in North Ryde at the Hicks family peach orchard in 1924.  
— By courtesy of the Hicks family.

#### **ALL NOT WELL WITH THE SCHOOL BELL**

In March 1888 Headmaster Lewis Henry complained of larrikins having torn down palings from the school fence and damaging the school bell, so that he could not summon the children to school. The bell was fixed some months later. On New Year's Day 1893 the bell was again cracked by larrikins skylarking in the school grounds. Despairing without this important aid the teacher finally decided to purchase one himself and cart it back to the school. He applied for reimbursement, the amount was paid, but he was cautioned not to incur any future expense without prior approval.

#### **THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE EVENING SCHOOL**

On August 4 an Evening School was established with a promising enrolment of more than 20 young men. Despite the initial enthusiasm, attendance soon fell off, so much so that the teacher James Glynn announced the collapse of the venture. Such a decline and fall was typical of Evening Schools for the basic reason that its scholars worked physically hard during the day and who, when sitting motionless on a school bench and perhaps comprehending little, tended to drop off to dreamland. Mr Glynn explained further: *I initially charged them 1/- per night, on local advice from Mr Cox, I reduced the fee to threepence. I have had no attendance for weeks. I regularly opened the school by lighting candles and waiting for some considerable time, hoping that even a few would come, but to no avail. I do not think they find any fault with me, but they find games during the dark night and hunting in the moonlight more congenial.*

The poor schoolie then asked to be advised how much payment from the Department he should apply for. He was asked to indicate the average attendance for the short life of the school. This did not reach the minimum of 10 per session, so the parsimonious authorities informed him he would receive nil. He duly appealed and was paid only for the month of September, four nights out of the twelve he had taught and the other nights when he showed the light of education in vain.

Pupil's Jest: *Why didn't the skeleton go to the see the movies at the Khartoum Theatre? Because it had no body to go with.*

Thoughtful advice to young male pupils of 1910:

#### **DO YOUR BEST**

*Think the good and not the clever;  
Thoughts are seeds that grow,  
Forever bearing richest fruit in life.  
Such alone can make the thinker strong  
To conquer in the strife.*

*Love the good and not the clever.  
Noble men — the world can never cease  
To praise the good they've done.  
They alone the true who gather  
Harvests which their deeds have won.*

*Do the good and not the clever.  
Fill thy life with true endeavour:  
Strive to be the noblest man.  
Not what others do, but rather do the best you can.*

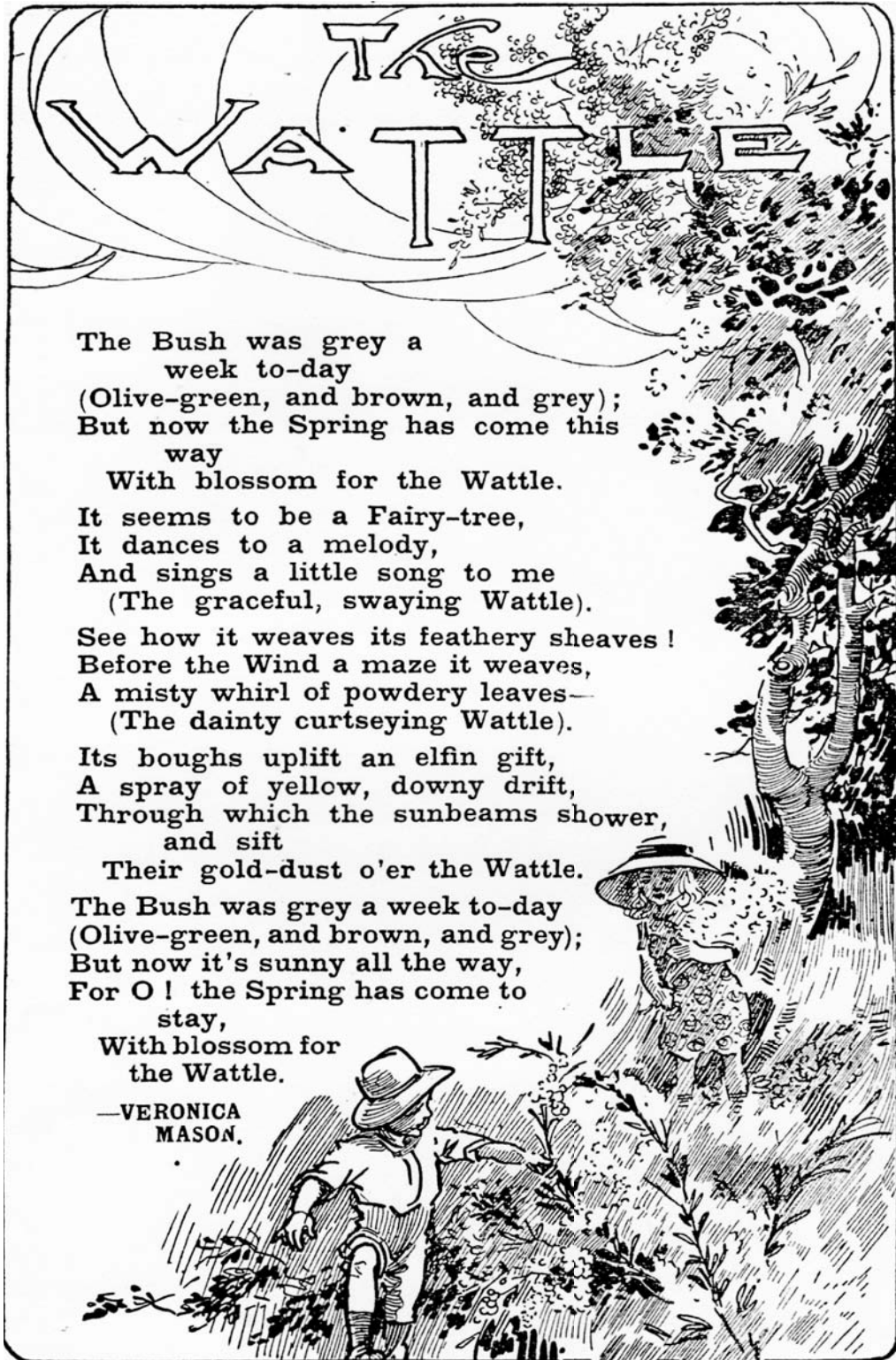
#### **EVEN ADULTS CAN IMPROVE WITH AGE**

A man who had taught for a long time at North Ryde Public School came back some years later on a visit to the School Museum. He was enthusiastically greeted by many ex-pupils including one young man-about-town who had just celebrated his twenty-first birthday. Recalling the lad from his class and some of the problems of his youth, the teacher asked how he was now getting along with his Dad. This was his illuminating reply: *Oh, quite well really. You know, Sir, when I was sixteen, my father was incredibly dumb, but over the past five years he's really improved out of sight.*

#### **THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR BACKWARD PUPILS**

**TSEB SI LOOHCS EDYR HTRON**

On August 1 1918 *The School Magazine* featured: THE WATTLE.



The Bush was grey a  
week to-day  
(Olive-green, and brown, and grey);  
But now the Spring has come this  
way

With blossom for the Wattle.

It seems to be a Fairy-tree,  
It dances to a melody,  
And sings a little song to me  
(The graceful, swaying Wattle).

See how it weaves its feathery sheaves !  
Before the Wind a maze it weaves,  
A misty whirl of powdery leaves—  
(The dainty curtseying Wattle).

Its boughs uplift an elfin gift,  
A spray of yellow, downy drift,  
Through which the sunbeams shower,  
and sift

Their gold-dust o'er the Wattle.

The Bush was grey a week to-day  
(Olive-green, and brown, and grey);  
But now it's sunny all the way,  
For O ! the Spring has come to  
stay,

With blossom for  
the Wattle.

—VERONICA  
MASON.

Wattle Day was celebrated in every class each year on August 1. In rural North Ryde there was an abundance of wattles growing, and thoughtful pupils, especially girls, would gather blossoms for school and for home. North Ryde School was indeed a bush school as described by May McNutt in The School Magazine in 1916:

*It nestles on the hillside, the little school I know,  
Where gums and wattles whisper, where flowers and bracken grow,  
Where bush birds carol gaily and sweetly comes the strain  
Of happy children's voices in answer back again.*

**EASY MULTIPLICATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS  
WITHOUT A COMPUTER**

111, 111, 111 X 111, 111, 111 = 12, 345, 678, 987, 654, 321

**THE MYSTERIOUS MISCHIEF-MAKER**

Since the following complaint was found in the School Files for North Ryde, one can only assume that the teacher in question taught at North Ryde.

A letter of complaint dated July 2 1902 from M. Martz of View Street, Annandale arrived in the tray of the Minister for Public Instruction. It read: *Is it right for a teacher's wife to carry on a business when her husband teaches in a Public School? She is able to compete with others who have to get their living by shopkeeping and they have no show against her. I am told she makes £4 a week, has two sons in the railway, one a school teacher and several daughters going to business. It is not fair that such a thing is aloud [sic]. The name is Ainsworth and they keep a newspaper shop in Johnston Street Annandale.*

Mr Ainsworth was invited by the authorities to answer the charge: *In February 1900 I was removed to the Macleay River and as I could not possibly take my family (12 in number) with me, I decided to purchase a newsagency in Johnston Street to give employment to my three boys and at the same time to furnish a house for the rest of the family. I had three daughters who were first to take positions in the city. To do this, as the boys were not old enough to have an account in the bank and not old enough to enter into an agreement with the newspaper offices, I was obliged to put the business in the name of my wife, who would at the same time be able to take care of the family. The business is carried on by my sons and a hired man. As for the other boys, not liking the business, they have since obtained employment in the railway service. I had two daughters employed in the city, but they have been at home now for some considerable time. Only by exercise of the most rigid economy on the part of my wife and myself for twelve years have we been able to bring up the family respectably.*

*The business was bought for three reasons; To act as a base from which different members of the family could radiate into spheres of usefulness; to train them with a spirit of reliance; and to leave them with a house in the event of my being called away to that "Bourne \* from which no traveller has yet returned".*

\* An archaic word meaning the terminal point of a journey

The authorities found the explanation satisfactory and all in order under the regulations as long as the schoolmaster was not himself involved in the business. They sought to write and inform the complainant accordingly, but the only Martz in Annandale to be found was a Mrs F. Martz, a widow with one son named Albert in Booth Street. She knew nothing whatsoever about the affair. It seems that the jealous complainant had lodged the letter under an assumed name. Perhaps the mischief-making miscreant had something against the Martz family? The matter was not quite concluded. In early November a second letter addressed from *The Truth Office*, but this time unsigned, made a similar though much briefer complaint. Of course it was ignored.

#### **INSIGHT INTO WORDS: TOAST – PALM – SAUCE – PORT**

Many English words have more than one meaning. We may cook toast for breakfast and we can also propose or drink a *toast* to somebody's health or happiness. The latter has its origins in England at the time of Shakespeare when toast was actually added to a glass of ale when drunk on special occasions.

You may wonder about the *palm* of your hand and the palm tree. They are connected. The palm tree is so called because the palm of the hand with the fingers outspread looks like the leaf on the tree.

*Sauce* and saucer look similar and really belong together since the saucer was originally used to hold the sauce. Sauce, salad and sausage actually all derive from the Latin *salsus* meaning salt.

It is hard to imagine what *port* meaning port wine (a very sweet red wine) has to do with port, the harbour where goods are carried in and out by ships (think of import and export, to carry in and carry out). In fact, the former is named after a place on the coast of Portugal, Oporto, which literally means *the port*. At school some kids would bring a case to school, mostly a Globite case. The teacher used to refer to this as a port. This was short for *portmanteau*, a French word meaning *carry coat*. A passport, that dates in Australia only from 1914, is derived from documents that allowed a person to pass through a fortified town's *porte*, French for gate.

The symbol @ on your computer comes from Latin, a fancifully written *ad*.



The flag-raising ceremony on Empire Day, May 24 1910. Among those present at the event were the local Member of Parliament and the Mayors of both Ryde and Eastwood. The flag, raised by pupils Myrtle Heard, Pierce Colera and Vera Hicks, was a gift from the Rosevale School in Glasgow, Scotland. — By courtesy of the New South Wales Schoolhouse Museum at North Ryde School. — [www.schoolhousemuseum.org.au](http://www.schoolhousemuseum.org.au)

In 1910 the Parents and Residents Association was formed, but changed its name in 1914 to the Parents and Citizens Association.

### IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

Back in 1910 a young farmer of 35 had fallen ill. It was rather peculiar, because he had been a great athlete in his day and had worked physically all his life without a single day's illness. He had recently become ill and each day was growing weaker and weaker. He was confined to bed, but was meticulously cared for by, day and night, by his competent, very patient wife. He had lost his appetite and with it a great deal of weight. He was suffering pains in the stomach. He just seemed to be wasting away. Should the doctor be called in? The man called his wife to his bedside and said: *Look, I am feeling pretty rotten. To be honest, I don't think I'm long for this world. But, before I go, there is something I must tell you. You know, my dear, that in all our fifteen years of marriage I have always loved you, always been faithful to you — well — almost always. You remember earlier this year. We had your pen-friend, Veronica, from Canada as guest for a few months. Well she was so gorgeous and friendly to me, I just couldn't resist her. My conscience has been troubling me since, so I just felt I had to make this confession, before I leave this world.* The wife listened patiently, yet remained completely calm. Then she said: *No worries, my Dear. I have known about your affair all along. That's why I've been putting something extra in your tea every day since!*

### PARADE OF THE PARROTS BY OUR BUSH SCHOOL

*Sounds of the morning quietly dawning,  
A soft song is heard from a far-off bird.  
Then sudden intrusion to leafy seclusion —  
The swift-swooping shock of a parakeet flock.  
Invading the tree with obvious glee,  
Every bird talking with good-natured squawking;  
The numbers increasing, the noise never-ceasing;  
Each jacket its own built-in racket.  
Not one dullard, but all gaily-coloured,  
Screeching and squabbling, greedily gobbling;  
Cavorting and clowning with some upside downing  
With no sort of danger from this silent stranger.  
Then ... suddenly ... quiet ... replaces the riot  
As they head for a spree in some other tree.  
And so, parakeet, so strident, so sweet,  
I salute you, and then, whisper: "Please call again."*

Jack Egan

### HOW MANY DAYS IN A MONTH?

THIRTY DAYS HAS SEPTEMBER. ALL THE REST I CAN'T REMEMBER.  
THE CALENDAR'S THERE ON THE WALL.  
WHY BOTHER ME WITH THIS AT ALL?

In a Qualifying Certificate examination in 1925, candidates were asked to define a volcano. One pupil wrote the following: *It is a mountain with a hole in the top, and if you look down the hole, you can see the creator smoking.*



Scene at North Sydney at wharf and tram terminus in the early 1920s to which people on the North Shore travelled in order to go into the City by ferry. Because there was no direct road linking North Ryde to the Pacific Highway until the Epping Road in 1940, save the long way via De Burgh's Bridge, the majority of North Ryders would have travelled to the city by electric tram from Ryde. These styles of trams were still in use when trams were replaced by buses in the 1950s. The sign on the building on the right reads: HORDERN BROTHERS LTD: CARPETS LINOS & FURNISHINGS.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge was not completed until 1932. At North Sydney in 1935 during the Great Economic Depression there was a great revival in cheap fun, namely through the establishment of Luna Park with its huge attractive smiling face at the entrance which was free. There was all manner of thrilling entertainments including the breath-taking Big Dipper train ride, the Ghost Train, the River Caves, the Big Spider, the Hall of Mirrors, the Tumble Bug, the Octopus Ride, the Whirligig, Coney Island with its many thrills like the Slippery Dips and the Whirler. In the late 1930s the author recalls spending Saturday afternoon at Luna Park, without paying a penny, thanks to coupons saved by his Mum's regular buying of *Aeroplane* Jellies.

### THE CASE OF THE ITALIAN ORCHARDIST

The death of orchardist, Giuseppe Benvenuto might have passed for suicide but for the keen eye of a Ryde policeman. Benvenuto had come to Australia from Italy as a boy of nine years. His family being poor he had left school in the fourth grade to go to work in the orchard at North Ryde. Later he had married and raised two sons. He found English difficult. Despite his limited education Giuseppe used to faithfully read the weekly Italian language newspaper.

One day his body was found in his modest dwelling where he had lived alone since the death of his wife, Anna Maria. He had apparently shot himself with a revolver he usually kept by him for protection. When the police arrived, they found no substance to the rumours that he had kept his life's savings in the house. By his body was a suicide note, written, his sons were convinced, in his handwriting. It read: *I am tired and sick. I am too old. My body pains me every hour of the day. The doctors claim that they can do nothing to improve my constant suffering. If I were twenty years younger, I'd try to carry on, but my Anna is dead and my sons have families of their own. I do not wish to be a nuisance. This is the only solution for me. God forgive me!*

### THE BEST MADE PLANS OF MICE AND MEN CAN GO ASTRAY NOW AND THEN

Having studied the note, the Constable concluded: *Benvenuto was murdered, the note is a forgery*, he reported. Why? After learning that Benvenuto had left school in the fourth grade and could only read a newspaper in Italian, he could not have possibly written this note in perfect grammar (including the verb in the subjunctive mood in "if I were twenty years younger"), punctuation and spelling. Despite the policeman's perspicuity and accusations against the sons, the case remained unsolved.

### THE MORAL OF THE STORY: KNOW YOUR GRAMMAR.

### EXTRACTS FROM A NORTH RYDE GIRL'S AUTOGRAPH BOOK OF 1924

#### Love Cake

4 ounces of kisses, 4 sweet lips pressed close together with 2 ounces of love,  
2 ounces of teasing, half an ounce of squeezing,  
baked well in a young man's arms and served in the dark.

\*

The man sat in the Manly boat; his head was in a whirl.  
His eyes and mouth were full of hair and his arms were full of girl.  
Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's wife, his bulls thou shall not slaughter,  
But, thank the Lord, it is no sin to covet thy neighbour's daughter.

\*

All good girls love their brothers, but I so good have grown,  
That I love other girls' brothers far better than my own.

\*

"Waste not, want not," but when you see any waist, put your arm around it.

\*

When is a man like a cannon ? When he looks round.

Note from boy: *Roses are red, violets are blue.*

*Sugar is sweet and so are you !*

Girl's reply : *Roses are red. Violets are blue.*

*I've never met such a fibber as you !*

\*

My heart is like a cabbage; it's nearly split in two

The leaves I give to others; the heart I give to you.

Make new friends, but keep the old;

New ones are silver, old ones are gold.

The measure of love is love without measure.

The secret of successful living is to draw a straight line

And walk it regardless of other people's crooked curves.

### **POST-SCHOOLDAYS LOYALTY**

All ex-pupils of North Ryde Public School are respectfully requested to patronise the business of one of their own who diligently conducts a local business buying junk and selling antiques.

### **SOME GEMS FROM PUPILS' EXAM PAPERS**

John Macarthur crossed an English sheep with a Spanish *mariner*.

Captain Cook had a very good expression for the East Coast of Australia.

When Caesar asked Cleopatra to be his mistress, she *reclined*.

The sun is the centre of the solar *cistern*.

There are special schools in the city for *depraved* children.

In my grandfather's day they used to use *hores* to pull the plough.

Bach was a great musician. He had 19 children

and used to practise on an old *spinster* in the attic.

The government in India is displaying birth control signs

in every *conceivable* place.

When the Spanish Armada was sighted,

Sir Francis Drake was still playing with his *bowels*.

The Prime Minister went to the *Privy* for advice.

We mail-order all our clothes from the capital and get them by *partial* post.

I learned to read and *riot* in a bush school.

### **POLITE ENQUIRY ABOUT PARENT'S OCCUPATION**

Teacher: Now, Shirley, what does your Daddy do?

Pupil: Well, he always does whatever Mummy asks.

*The School Magazine* issued monthly by the Department of Education of New South Wales since February 1 1916. The word magazine comes from the Arabic and means a storehouse, hence, for instance, the magazine of a rifle. In days of comparatively few books in most family homes *The School Magazine* was a veritable storehouse of riches in literature, knowledge and wisdom, a *pot pourri* of world culture with tales of all lands and all times; inspiring stories of heroism, dedication and adventure; myths, fables and morals; Bible stories; famous songs and chosen poems both Australian and English; features on Arbor Day and nature; plus an occasional dash of patriotism and boosting of the British Empire theme. The *Magazine* was issued to Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes in the "big school".

We might consider whether the children of to-day could read these pieces with greater facility than those of long ago. In the reading passages for Third Class it was customary to number each sentence for greater ease for pupils and control for questioning by the teacher.

#### ON THE LIGHT SIDE

In 1925 a reporter from *The Town & Country Journal* had come to write an article on one of the many farms in North Ryde. The first afternoon on a tour around the farm, the farmer picked up a dead chook in the fowlyard. That night poultry and vegies were served for dinner. The next morning, on a walk down by the creek, the visitor heard a farmhand tell the boss that a pig had died overnight. At the midday meal pork was served. After the meal, the reporter was busy writing up his report, when the farmer came into the homestead and told his wife that their cattle dog had been run over and killed by the buggy. With that the reporter got up and apologized that he had a pressing appointment in the City and would not be staying for the evening meal.

A new family was just settling in at rural North Ryde when their young lad rushed to his father: *Hey Dad, you should come and see. There are thousands of parrots outside.* Father: *How many thousand times have I told you not to exaggerate?*

#### ON THE SUBJECT OF I.P. s (IRATE PARENTS)

There have always been and always will be irate parents. Full consultation between parents and school authorities is the only way to get to the truth of a matter which causes ire. Most times it is a logical chain of events: the teacher gets angry, the pupil gets angry and then the parents get angry. Pupils are not always the angels they appeared to be in the perambulator. Are there no more naughty children to-day? Are there no more half truths told at home by troubled pupils to sympathetic parents? Is the teacher at fault? Is it the system that is failing? Or is it that the child is guilty of a breach of discipline? Is communication so good to-day that there are no more irate parents? The teacher to-day has a difficult job, handling young human beings of varied abilities, different cultures and family backgrounds.

No teacher is ideal, but in the 19th century, the National Board of Education considered this: *A teacher should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper and discreet. A teacher should be imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law and loyalty to the Sovereign, and should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the minds of youth and giving a useful direction to the power that education brings.*

Dull pupils used to be referred to as dunces. The usage, thank goodness, has disappeared and with it the practice of degrading a pupil for being a slow learner. Strange to tell, the word *dunce* derives from the name of a great Scottish intellectual, Duns Scotus. Anyone can make a mistake. This typed notice to parents, for example: *School will be closed for an extra week for altercations.*

#### IF IT'S LAUGHTER YOU'RE AFTER:

In 1901 the teacher wrote on the board: *The toast was drank in silence.* She then asked: *Who can correct that faulty sentence?* After a considerable silence one thoughtful girl came to the rescue with this: *The toast was ate in silence.* **2.** In a scripture lesson the teacher was reading from the Parable of the Prodigal Son and asked this rhetorical question: *Now, who would not be glad to hear about the return of the Prodigal Son?* One pupil was quick to respond: *Please, Sir, the fatted calf.* **3.** It was after Scripture class. Two boys were discussing the mention of the Devil. David: *Do you believe in the Devil, Harry?* Harry: *Heck, no. It's just like Santa Claus. It's your father.* **4.** Voice on the telephone: *I'm ringing up to say that Willie Smith is sick to-day and won't be going to school.* Principal: *Oh yes. Who is speaking, please?* Voice: *This is me father.* **5.** A local girl was usually helped by Dad with her Maths homework in which she invariably failed. One Monday, however, the teacher was pleasantly surprised to note that she had all her work correct. Accordingly, he complimented her: *Congratulations, Mabel, 100%. But did you get help from anyone ?* No, Sir, *Dad was away in Sydney for the whole week-end.* **6.** Woman Teacher: *Can't you tell me the Kings of England? Why, when I was a girl, I could recite all the names of the Kings frontwards and backwards.* Pupil (innocently): *Maybe, Miss, but when you were my age, there weren't so many Kings.*

**CURIOSITY:** Times change. Meanings change. When children of 1890s looked in a dictionary at the definition of parachute, they found the following: *A sort of umbrella which enables an aeronaut to descend from a balloon.*

**TALE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL:** A North Ryde woman notices one day on the December calendar has been highlighted in red by her husband. As that day is her birthday, she feels secretly special, until hubby announces that he needs new socks for that date —the firm's annual golf day at the local links. The wife dutifully complies with his request and presents him with an appropriate pair of socks — with exactly nine holes in each one!

### **("Sun Special)**

As hygiene was a part of the curriculum in the Primary School, the teacher took a copy of the evening newspaper, *The Sun*, and read the following report to his Sixth Class pupils: *London, March 3, 1925: Within a century, man should live to 150 years of age, and might become immortal, if he escapes germs, said Colonel Sir Ronald Ross, a leading authority on malaria to-day, when pointing out that research during the past 80 years had lengthened the average life by twenty years. Britain, he said should spend a million pounds a year on research, as medical science has not yet discovered the germs of smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, or of a common cold.*

### **WHERE HAS ALL THE MONEY GONE?**

On July 5 1929 Miss E. Larkin of Lucknow Road, Honorary Secretary of the Parents and Citizens Association, contacted the Director of Education inquiring into the last three School Concerts instigated by the Headmaster, Mr J. Forsyth, and ear-marked for school funds. Apparently the Head also asked pupils to supply and support fundraising "Tuckshops" held from time to time. Older readers may remember such things when toffees in paper patty pans, cakes or apples-on-sticks were for sale during recess on certain occasions. Miss Larkin stated that the P & C were always prepared to supply any necessary extras, the latest request being a Map of the World costing 35/-, but if the principal's account was still open and she believed it was, why should parents be asked to support three funds for the same purpose. Of course, we are not told whether there was any suspicion of misuse of funds by the Principal or whether there had been any altercation between the Principal and any office-bearer or member of the P & C. The latter can often account for a well-planned attack on a teacher. Though there were no serious allegations made by Miss Larkin, such an inquiry behind the Principal's back never augurs well for good relations and is ultimately detrimental to the welfare of the school.

Mr Forsyth duly put forward his explanations, namely that all moneys obtained from concerts had been properly spent and for the benefit of the school children. To quote him: *I have held entertainments at various times over 30 years as your records will show and have always been able to show that the money has been correctly spent. If the P & C had been anxious to help the school, they could have conveniently ascertained from me the manner in which the money was spent. They have been asked many times for things which the school needs, but they have stated they were short of funds or else delayed so long that the articles were obtained by other means. The map in question [which the P & C was reluctant to buy] has been purchased from the Government Savings Bank. The children, at their own suggestion [because they enjoy such things], have at various times held "tuckshops" [toffee days/cake days etc] for the benefit of Junior Red Cross work or for sports materials with no hardship on anyone and no complaints from parents.*

The Principal went on to enumerate in detail all that had been purchased from proceeds from school concerts held over the past two years, which could all be certified by the Staff. He further invited the Department to send an Accounts Officer to check the books. The Department, which had always considered Mr Forsyth as a man of probity and trust, fully accepted his statements and viewed the P. & C. enquiry into school funds as quite outside of their function. They also reminded the Head that Tuckshops as such were not allowed in the school and that sale of goods could be conducted only with prior approval, a regulation which was generally adhered to in the breach.



Picnic Day in 1929 organised by the Parents and Citizens of North Ryde Public School. Considering the comparatively small enrolment of the school in those days, the roll-up of parents, a reflection of their interest in the school, was impressive. — Photo by courtesy of Ryde Historical Society.

### **MEMORIES OF MY OLD BUSH SCHOOL**

*With its seedy desks and benches, where at least I left my name  
Carved in agricultural letters — 'twas my only bid for fame;  
And the spider-haunted ceiling, and the rafters firmly set,  
Lined with darts of nibs and paper (doubtless sticking to them yet),  
And the greasy slates and blackboards, where I oft was proved a fool  
And a blur upon the escutcheon of the old bush school. — John O'Brien*

**SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD:** The newly appointed Head Teacher at North Ryde had very strict rules about any pupil being out of class during lesson time without his own approval. Woe betide any pupil, big or small he found disobeying this rule. One morning, well before recess, he sighted a large lump of a lad moving over to the teacher's residence. Like a flash he grabbed his cane, raced over to the boy, took him by the hand and told him to hold out for a well-deserved dose of the stick. The lad protested, whereupon the teacher delivered a blow to his legs. The boy seemed dumb-founded and could merely utter *But...but...but...* The teacher relented slightly with the words: *Well, it seems you insist on saying something. You had better have your say before I thrash you for being out of class. Just what is it you want to say, boy?* The lad replied: *I've been trying to tell you that I'm the delivery boy from Heap's Ryde Pharmacy with some cough mixture for your wife.*

### EVENTS OF THE DECADE

On April 8 1930 42 pupils and two teachers from North Ryde attended a matinee of Miss Mack's Travel Pictures at the West Ryde theatre in West Parade, West Ryde. Being the first year of talking pictures, the event was the thrill of a lifetime for most of those present. The various reels took them in their chair through Arabia, India, China, Japan, Italy, France, Germany, England, Scotland and Ireland. They ski-ed down the slopes of the Swiss Alps. One teacher described the matinee as the best he had ever seen. The language was English and vulgarities were entirely absent. The sum of 6/6 (65 cents) was paid into school funds.

On March 16, 1932, North Ryde pupils, eight years old and over, carrying a commemorative flag, joined children from scores of Sydney schools to march across the grand Harbour Bridge just prior to its official opening.



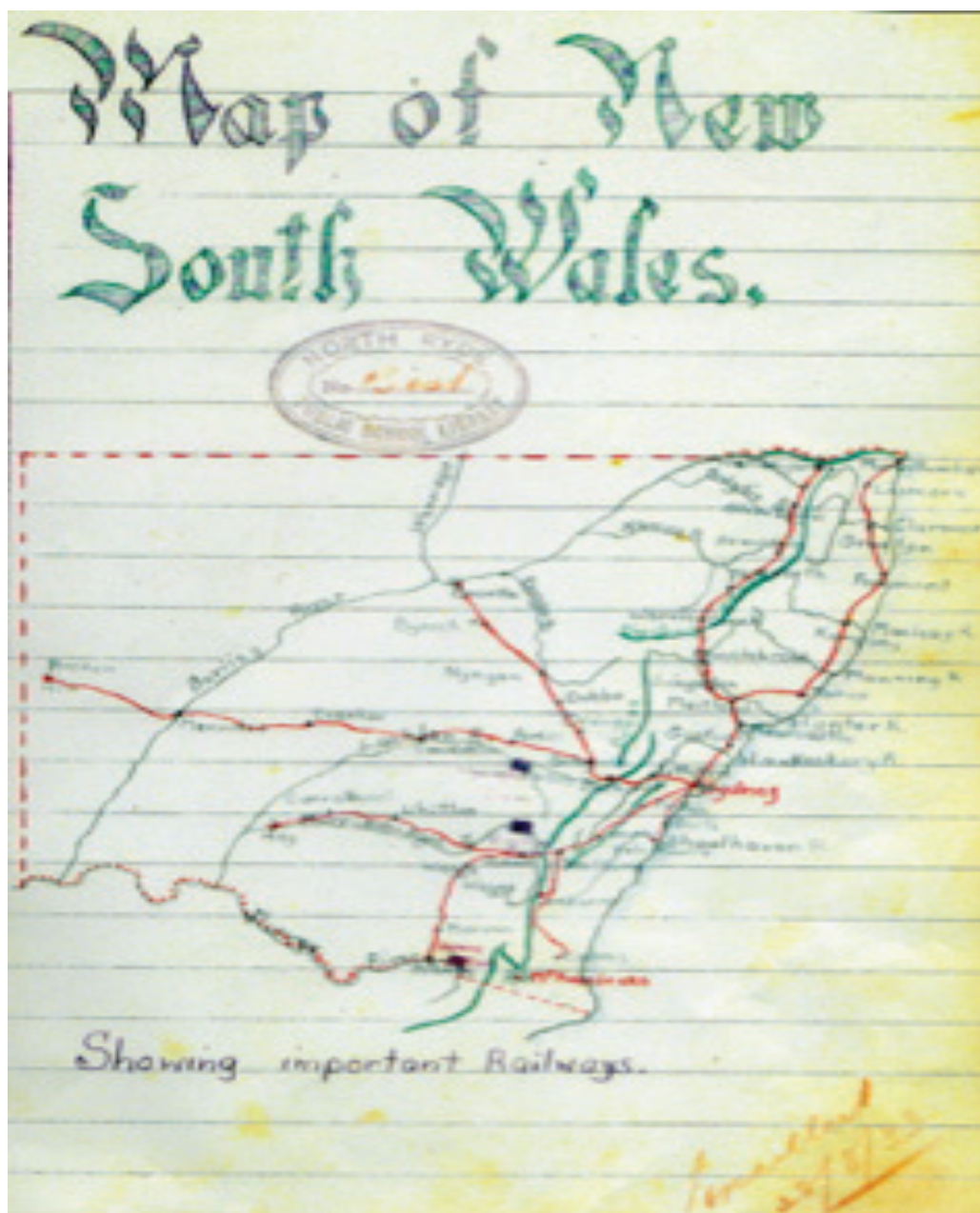
## THE EVENT OF THE CENTURY



On May 19, 1932, after the official opening one million eager Sydneysiders, including families from North Ryde, thronged to the capital to walk across the magnificent bridge that would unite the north and south sides of the harbour. The official opening ceremony on the south side was disrupted by a certain Captain de Groot, whose sabre cut the ribbon, before the premier, Jack Lang could cut the ribbon. Sadly, sixteen lives were lost during the building of the bridge.

### SPEAKING THE TRUTH

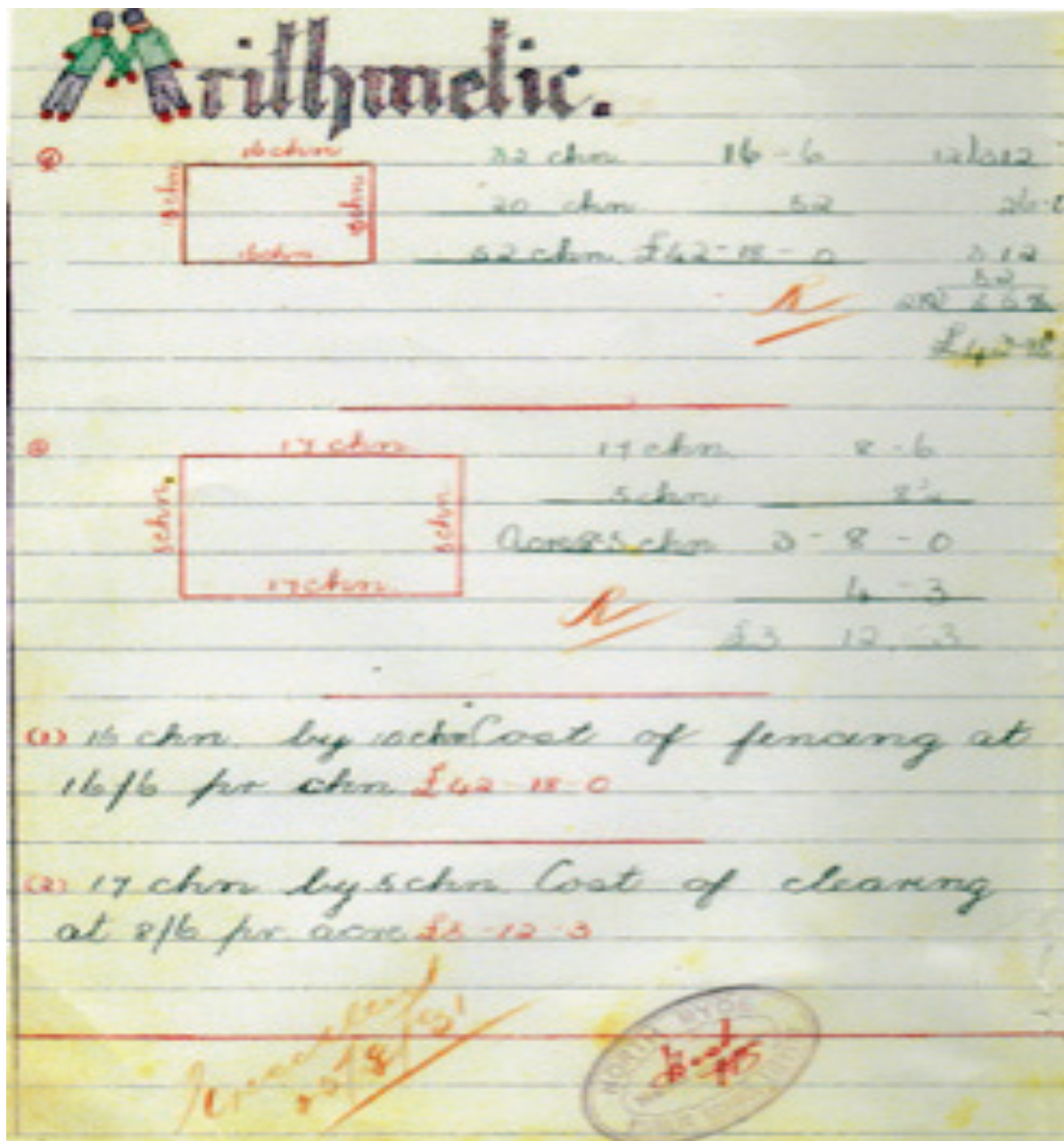
On the lighter side, local legend has it that a six-year old North Ryder returned home after his first day at school and that his mother asked him about his experience. The conversation went like this: — *Mum, the teacher asked me if I had any more brothers and sisters who might be coming to school.* — *Did you say you were the last?* — *Yes, I did, Mum, and she said "Thank goodness!"*



From the homework exercise book of pupil, Jean Whiteman, 6<sup>th</sup> Class, 1933. —  
By courtesy of the N.S.W. Schoolhouse Museum Collection 2000-566 932.21.

### LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

Two boys were talking in the playground about how good their fathers were. **A:** *Look, my father is so fast! When he goes to bed, he puts off the light switch by the doorway, moves to his bed and tucks himself in — all before the light bulb goes out. You can't beat that!* **B:** *Oh yes I can! My father works for the Government. He knocks off every day at 5 o'clock — and he's home by 3:30!*



Map of New South Wales from the homework exercise book of pupil, Jean Whiteman, 6<sup>th</sup> Class, 1933. — By courtesy of the N.S.W. Schoolhouse Museum Collection 2000-566 932.21.

### JEST IN PASSING: OUR DAD IS NO DUMB OX

In the early days many of parents were themselves without much education, but some children did get assistance with their homework. One girl claimed that her father helped her to fail in English, when, for example, she had to find out the meaning of the word "equinox". Well, my girl, said Dad, who had, of course, knew something about equestrian events, *equinox is a mythical animal that is half horse and half ox.*

Our chemists wise, it comes to pass, are making milk from grain and grass;  
But lovers of this fluid say they still prefer the udder way.

### EMPIRE DAY 1934

Pupil Don Rennie remembers walking two miles to school and two long miles home. He was only six when he started school in 1934 with no uniform or shoes. 80% of the pupils, particularly boys, wore no shoes. *The Empire Day was a special occasion with pupils chosen by teacher, Mrs Bryce, to dress up. The School walked over to the School of Arts in Coss Road where they sang patriotic British songs such as Rule Britannia and God Save the King.*



Don remembers going straight into First and Second Class in the old 1877 room, as there was no Kindergarten Class as such. Laurel Jump, a Sixth Class pupil, looked after these little ones. Mrs Dolly Benson taught the girls sewing in the 1893 room. Third and Fourth Class were in the 1910 room on the playground side. The Fourth Class boys were allowed to tend the school vegetable garden. Don went on to Ryde Public School in 1938. — *From North Ryde Public School Celebrating 125 Years.*

### THE JOY OF TWIN BOYS

On February 5 1938 Mrs A. King of Twin Road wrote to the Minister with several complaints to lay upon one of his servants at North Ryde Public School by the name of Turner. *Firstly, I might mention that my twin sons were ordered to the care of the Child Welfare Department by the sitting magistrate at Ryde Court yesterday the 4th. I quite agree by what the magistrate decided upon, but my complaint is this: Turner reported my sons and one other boy for breaking and entering the school.*

*He omitted his own son, who is older and as bad as the others. Turner came to court, denounced my sons, spoke well of the other culprit who had a bad reputation as did his whole family in general. The reason this was done is that turner will use any child if he could benefit from it.*

*Some months ago I've made complaints both Mr Forsyth [the Headmaster] and the Inspector of the conduct of my boys and the school in general. My one complaint was that the teachers had my sons wheeling manure from an empty farmhouse half a mile from school for weeks during school hours. I stopped this. On another occasion Turner sent the boys with a rooster to a Chinamen's den to try and sell this. I saw this and sent the boys back to school. He then had them cleaning up the Church grounds adjacent to the school. Turner acts as if he is preacher and Church Warden — in school hours. Turner wanted boys to go and pinch or cadge vegetables for him. The boys said they wouldn't go. I know of no other school where a band of boys smoke cigarettes by the hundreds and swear, altogether an unruly lot of scamps, Turner's sons included. My boys have gone, thank goodness and I am truly thankful. It's a pity the other children were not taken too. Mr Forsyth who is soon retiring, is too lenient and the other master is not in my eyes, a proper person to have the care of boys. My boys are worse scholars now than when they started three years ago, for the simple reason that they have been used for manual labour instead of learning to read and write. My complaints have caused Turner to act bitter towards me and my children. I have been approached by authorities and asked if I knew that Turner boozed. I said that what I heard I would not be a bit surprised. I am writing this as a parent whose boys have learned nothing but roguery along with other scamps in the school. A new master would be a wonderful asset to the school.*

Then came Mr E. Turner's turn to defend himself, although the Department had excluded charges about his boozing which were only hearsay. Among his statements: *The King twins have long been a trouble. Though I have done everything in my power to improve them, it seemed impossible to cure them of falsehoods and stealing. They were taken by the police for various robberies in the district and acknowledged breaking into the school building. After they had pleaded guilty at Court, I was asked by the magistrate, to speak concerning the boys' character. This I did, but not denouncing them as the mother asserts. As far as I can recollect [always a very convenient defence], the boys were not at any time asked to get manure. The children who did a little clearing in the Church grounds were boys whose parents are interested in the Church and who asked permission for the boys to do such work during lunch hours. The King lads were never asked to do such work.*

*With regard to the rooster, my wife gave a rooster to a boy, Ken Pattingale, who took it during lunch hour to one of the Chinese residents. The Kings went with him, but not with my knowledge. They returned about five minutes after school started and were detained that afternoon to make up for time lost.*

*My experience of the King boys was that they were continually trying to evade school work and adopt all manner of tactics to remain out during school hours. On one occasion they arrived at school at 7:30 a.m. and voluntarily commenced to rake up leaves at the side of the school. They disobeyed the assembly bell and were not missed for some five to ten minutes, when they were promptly brought into school.*

The Headmaster, Mr Forsyth, supported his assistant by maintaining that the complaints had been made in a spirit of animus [animosity] without foundation and unworthy of attention. *Her boys have been a difficult proposition since they first attended here. They have been frequently found stealing. As for the smoking, they are the only ones ever known to be smokers. In general the children here are well behaved.* Though the authorities believed that some of Mr Turner's explanations were not entirely satisfactory, they dismissed Mrs King's charges as unsubstantiated and cautioned Mr Turner not to send children out of school and that assigning those odd jobs in the Church grounds was improper.



Over many decades the Small family, pioneers of the district, contributed no small number of children to receive their education at North Ryde Public School. — Photo by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society

**NOTE FOUND IN A SCHOOL DESK IN 1938**

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| READ | SEE  | THAT | ME   |
| UP   | WILL | I    | LOVE |
| AND  | YOU  | LOVE | YOU  |
| DOWN | AND  | YOU  | IF   |

Read aloud in the Staff Room one day, when the standard refresher was tea:

### REFLECTIONS ON ALCOHOL

*'Twas an evening in November and I very well remember:  
I was walking down the street in drunken pride,  
But my knees were all a-flutter, so I landed in the gutter  
And a pig came up and lay down by my side.  
Yes, I lay there in the gutter'  
Thinking thoughts I could not utter,  
When a lady passing by did softly say:  
"You can tell a man that boozes  
By the company he chooses."  
At that the pig got up and ran away.*

### EX-STUDENTS: SENILE SENIORS?

Charles and Sally were childhood sweethearts ever since they attended North Ryde School. On their 50th anniversary of marriage they return to their old school and find the desk where Charles had carved *I love you, Sally*. On their way back to their home nearby, they see a bundle of banknotes drop out from a passing armoured car. They take the money home and count it, a staggering \$10 000. After mature reflexion, Charles says: *Beautiful! But we have to hand it over to the authorities. Not so!* says Sally. *Finders keepers!* Later that day two policemen, going from door to door, ask them whether they know anything about the missing money. Straightaway Sally says: *Nothing at all*. Then Stan says quietly: *I'm afraid she's not telling the truth. She has hid it in the attic. Don't listen to him!* says Sally quietly. *Sadly, he's going senile*. One of the officers then addresses Stan: *OK, you had better tell your story from the beginning*. Stan then says: *Well, Sally and I were walking home from school ...* On hearing this, the officer says to his partner: *Come on! ... we're out of here*.

### THE TONIC SOLFA: DOH REY ME FAH SOH LA TI DOH

The tonic solfa, the system of naming degrees on the musical scale, is credited to Italian Guido D'arezzo (ca 995-1050) who composed a melody to an eighth century Latin hymn for the feast of John the Baptist, each line of which began on a tone of the scale in descending order. The first syllable of each word therefore became the basis of our sol-fa system. Centuries later *UT* was changed to *DOH*, *SA* became *TI* in English, but *SI* in most European tongues and *DOH* was repeated at the top of the scale:

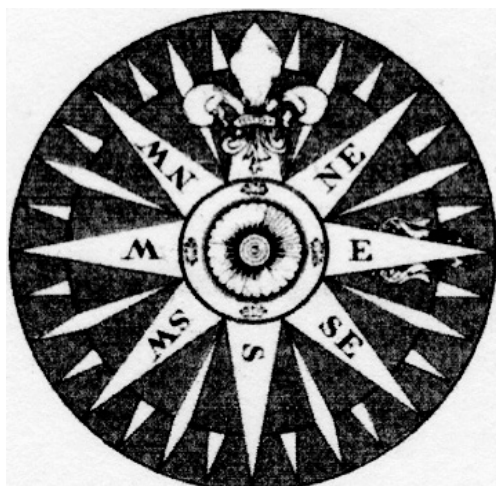
*UT queant laxis  
RE sonare fibris  
MI ra gestorum  
FA muli tuorum  
LA bii reatum—  
SA ncta Johannes.*

(That thy servants may freely sing forth the wonders of their deeds, remove all stain of guilt from their unclean lips, O Saint John).



In the late 1940s and early 1950s North Ryde was still very rural as we see Joy Walker and her pal Susie on her family's five-acre property at 154 Wicks Road. — Courtesy of Joy Walker.

By 1956 with the release of green belt land in the area and private homes being built everywhere around, the school enrolment soared to 630 and within a few more years to 1280. Lots of temporary portable classrooms were assembled, limiting playground areas. Accommodation off site in hired church halls, School of Arts and Scout Hall became necessary. The difficult situation was solved only by the establishment of Truscott School, then schools at East Ryde and Kent Road. Eventually the portables were removed, new buildings were erected and the spacious park-like grounds with a grove of gum-trees were established.



Whenever you are in the centre of the City of Ryde provided with your education memorabilia compass, it will always point north, indeed to North Ryde Public School, where you will find a treasure trove of museum pieces and welcoming assistants:

## THE NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Schoolhouse Museum of Public Education pictured lower left is almost unique in New South Wales. It contains a wealth of memorabilia and is staffed by enthusiastic volunteers who take the public, thousands every year, as well as current classes back in time, providing a lesson to appreciate the modern school and its excellent facilities. The museum is housed in the original building of 1878 together with a classroom of 1893. The timber front including windows on the right-hand side covering the verandah came from the old Marsfield Public School after it was demolished in 1989. The Honour Board from that school is also preserved here.

In the above composite picture centre bottom we see five bones called knuckles, originally bones connecting joints saved from Mum's Sunday roast lamb. A game using these is probably of Asiatic origin and popularised in Ancient Greece and Rome and later throughout the world. It was a game that cost nothing, played with five sheep knuckle bones, obtained from home after Sunday roast or from the local butcher. They were cleaned by putting them into boiling water. Five were tossed into the air and caught on the back of the hand. The game was also played with small stones and called Five Stones, Dabstones or Jackstones. The name Jackstones probably derives from chackstones or chuck stones, stones to be chucked [thrown]. There were variations to the game: one-ers, two-ers, three-ers and four-ers. To play one-ers the jacks would be tossed into the air and the participant had to catch just one jack on the back of his hand; there followed two-ers, three-ers etc ... If a player dropped a jack more than once, he or she was out straightaway.



Anyone who went to school will relive moments of times past in the classroom. In the schoolroom where City View Public School, alias North Ryde, former teacher and volunteer Museum worker, Beth Buesnel, takes us back to school items from long ago: the simple teacher's table, the school bell, the pen and nib, the quill, the rod of correction, the candle holder. In the background by the wall stands the computer of the 19th century, the ancient and honorable abacus. Situated in Cox's Road, North Ryde, this remarkable museum is housed in some of the rooms formerly occupied by the North Ryde School.

Apart from local treasures from both North Ryde and Marsfield Public Schools it contains a whole range of items from public schools around the State that have closed. The building itself, the furniture, musical scores books, maps, documents, photographs and other memorabilia bring the past back to the present for those who visit. They include former pupils of local and other schools, young pupils of to-day who can sit in the old classrooms and appreciate the difference between the facilities of the past and those they enjoy to-day.

Beth Buesnell, by the way, began teaching at North Ryde School in January 1966 and retired in 1993. — Photo by author.

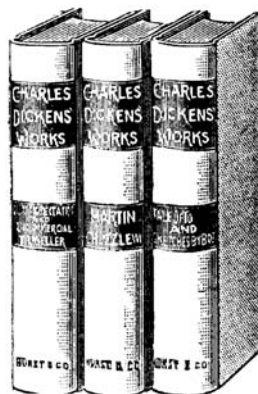
#### **CURIOSITY: THE LETTER AITCH:**

In the English alphabet the eight letter, H, is pronounced *aitch*. Some people, however, do pronounce the letter as *haitch*. This is generally a hangover from education by Irish priests in the 19th century.

**THOSE POOR LEFT-HANDERS:** In the original classroom of the first North Ryde School, now part of the School Museum, the windows on the left-hand side of the room are larger than those on the right-hand side. Why? The room was designed for right-handers, since they provided light over the over the right shoulders, so that there was no shadow over their work. There was no electric lighting in the room for dull days until 1931. Since English is written from left to right, using the right hand for writing is more favourable than using the left.

In former times, schoolteachers forced natural left-handers, who make up 10% of the population, to write unnaturally with their right hand. It has been shown that this practice could upset the delicate balance between lefts and rights in the brain. Fortunately, the old practice has disappeared. Left-handers have always been suspect since Roman times when they could shake hands with their right arm (the normal arm for the sword) and stab an adversary with their left. The very Latin word for left, *sinister*, is now part of English vocabulary but conveys a sinister meaning. Famous left-handers in history are Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, Joan of Arc and Napoleon.

In defence of left-handers, it can be said: *If the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body, then only left-handers are in their right mind!*



### **HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE: DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THIS RIDDLE?**

Among the myths of Greece is the story of the Sphinx in Egypt, the strange monster crouched on a hill above the city of Thebes, waiting to devour men, if they passed by without being able to answer this riddle; *What is it that has four feet in the morning, two at noon and three at night?*

After so many of his countrymen had perished, along came Oedipus who answered: *Man. As a baby he creeps on hands and knees, in mid-life walks on two feet, in old age totters along with the aid of a cane or third leg.*

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT:** The beautiful orchid flower comes to us from Greek meaning testicles, so named because of the plant as roots having two bulbs resembling the male genitalia.



November 10 1997: The lighting of the old gas lamp [preserved in the school] by Graeme Lewis of the Australian Gas Light Company. Lindsay Hill (left), long-time devoted curator of the Museum and Councillor Jim Hull are holding the historic photo of the dismantling of the last gas lamp in the district in 1904. — Photo by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

### JEST TO INFORM YOU

The new Inspector had come to North Ryde for the first time. He was diligently examining the Headmaster's class, but seemed highly disturbed by noise coming from the adjacent room. He stopped the lesson, rushed into next door and came back forthwith pulling by the ear the person who had been sounding off. He picked up the cane threateningly, when he remembered the very regulation that he insisted that all teachers observe before administering corporal punishment. Accordingly, he addressed the would-be miscreant and asked: *Now, have you anything to say before I cane you?* The anguished reply came back: *Yes indeed, Sir. I'm the pupil-teacher and that's my class next door!*

Though the teacher was glad for the help of a pupil-teacher, it was his or her duty not only to observe and assist the trainee in the classroom but also to give lessons one hour per day to further educate the young aide and to prepare him or her for examination, which, if successfully passed, would allow the candidate to enter the teaching service on a provisional basis. This meant that the Head Teacher's life was a busy one. To provide some idea of the lessons given here are just two tiny extracts from the notebook of a pupil-teacher in 1894: ENGLISH HISTORY: *George IV began to reign in 1714. He was the son of the Electress Sophia and great grandson of James ...* [The details of this exciting stuff, irrelevant to us to-day, go on for about two and a half written pages.] ARITHMETIC: *Goods were sold at 12 guineas at a profit of 22 38/41 per cent. What was the prime cost ?* Even the scholars were being asked such questions as how many acres in 30 000 000 square inches. [Hands up all those readers who could solve these problems without a calculator.] Obviously it was not all beer and skittles either for pupil-teacher or schoolmaster. The pupil-teacher system was phased out from 1905.



Members of the Small family in rural North Ryde early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **HISTORY IN THE STREETS IN AND AROUND NORTH RYDE**

The naming of the early Government roads in the North Ryde-Marsfield area after British battles came about in the late 19th century when the British Empire was at its heights in the reign of Queen Victoria and before the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia. At the Sydney Inter-Colonial Exhibition in 1879 massed choirs beefed out these words of a cantata especially written for the occasion by Australian-born Henry Kendall:

*Mighty nations, let them see How like England we can be.*

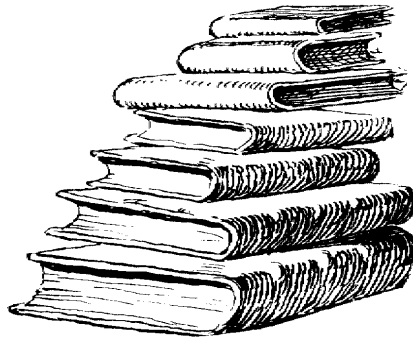
An area which had been dedicated to nature called the Field of Mars Common extending from present-day Beecroft through to Epping, Marsfield, North Ryde to Boronia Park was opened up for sale to the public.



The assigning of battle names extended from present-day Marsfield into North Ryde and East Ryde, even by the peaceful Field of Mars Cemetery, despite Mars being the Roman God of War. This is but one of the factors that bind Marsfield and North Ryde together. The motivation for the naming of streets after battles came from the Sudan War and particularly from the exuberant desire of the New South Wales Government to support Britain in the conflict by sending a contingent of troops. The story is worth noting to capture the attitude of the government of the day and its desire to perpetuate the glorious battles mostly, yet not always, won by Britain. This action in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was followed up in the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century after the end of World War II when quite a few streets in the North Ryde area were named after World War II officers, soldiers, battles and supporters.

## **WE NEVER STOP LEARNING**

No matter whether we are young or old, we continue to gain knowledge, hopefully the right type of knowledge. Whether studying at school, university, colleges or other institutions, we never stop learning. We learn daily from our life experiences. To-day information is so readily available, not only from printed books, encyclopedias, newspapers, radio, television and magazines, but also from all sorts of electronic media: computers, hand phones, compact discs and such. In old age, unfortunately, we may tend to lose so much from the storehouse of what we have learned.



Now for a project for local readers, young and old:

## **WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND ALL THOSE STREET NAMES DEPICTING BATTLES IN THE NORTH RYDE AND MARSFIELD AREA?**



They represent events of both British and Australian history of several centuries, as well as personal names of original owners and their family etc. and owners of properties sub-divided since the 1950s. Let's now leave our school at Cox's Road and have a peep at some of those original streets in the area:

## THE STORIES BEHIND THE STREET NAMES IN THE MARSFIELD-NORTH RYDE AREA

**Abuklea Road:** This road, part of which extends into Epping, is named after a town in the Sudan, Abu Klea, because of the presence, albeit for just a few weeks, of the New South Wales Contingent which volunteered to help in the British campaign against the "rebels" who had slaughtered General Charles Gordon at Khartoum in 1885. In the Australia of those days Empire-minded people named babies and streets after Gordon and the British generals involved in the Sudan campaign such as Wolseley and Graham. In Sydney there are more than 40 Gordon Streets, some 20 named after Wolseley and 20 after Graham.

**Agincourt Road:** Refers to the Battle of Agincourt in North-east France in 1415 when Henry V and his archers, though inferior in number, completely routed the French. It was one of the most brilliant victories in the history of England, whereupon Henry made himself master of northern France. The French losses were about 10 000 dead, while the English lost only about 300. This battle proved the superiority of the English long bowmen over the crossbowmen and marked the end of the dominance of the heavily armoured knights. The French had made three bold attacks. All were foiled by the English and defeat was turned into a rout. This famous battle, along with the battle of Crécy, took place during the Hundred Years war between England and France from the mid 14th to the mid 15th centuries. It did not last continuously for 100 years. Eventually the French, inspired by the leadership of Joan of Arc, divested the English of their possessions in France.



The way Sir John Gilbert portrayed the scene at Agincourt. English poet, Michael Drayton, summed up the day of the English victory at Agincourt by the following:

*Upon St Crispin's day fought was this noble fray  
Which fame did not delay to England to carry.  
O when shall Englishmen with such acts fill a pen  
Or England breed again such a King Harry.*

**Albuera Road:** Though this streets lies in Epping, west of Terrys Creek, it was part of the same subdivision of the Field of Mars Common as Marsfield and North Ryde. It was named after a battle in Spain, the scene of a British and Spanish victory over Napoleon's French forces in 1811. Albuera is the name of the town, 14 miles south east of the province of Badajoz (which see) on the frontier of Portugal.

It is of interest to note that the catchcry *Die Hard* came from the battle fought in Albuera. When the tide of battle seemed to turn against the 57th West Middlesex Regiment of Foot, their commander exhorted them thus: *Die hard, 57th*. For further scenes of battle in the Peninsular War of 1808-1814 see entries under Barossa, Busaco, Badajoz, Corunna, Talavera, Vimiera and Vittoria Roads.

**Alexandria Avenue:** Named after the Egyptian sea-port and its association with British military campaigns. From July 1798 the town was in French hands until it surrendered to British forces on August 31 1801. In 1882 during the Anglo-Egyptian wars its forts were devastated by Admiral Beauchamp Seymour leading to the British occupation of the city and eventually the country. It was the port of entry for troops bound for the Sudan War in 1885. In both World War I and II Alexandria was a strategic port of disembarkation of British and Australian troops.

**Alma Road:** Alma is a river in the Crimea, north-west of Sebastopol, South Russia, where the British forces under Lord Raglan combined with the French dared to attack an *impregnable* position. It was on the heights of the area that Russian General Prince Menschikoff had stationed his troops, boasting that they could hold off any attack for three weeks. In fact, the ladies of Sebastopol travelled to the Alma to enjoy both a picnic as well as the sight of the repulse of the foreign troops. Under orders of no retreat the British finally won the bloody battle at the cost of 4000 men. The Russians lost 6000.



The Crimean Peninsula, scene of the Crimean War between 60 000 British French and Turkish forces against a greater number of Russians. Here the main thrust of the invaders was against the ports of Sebastopol on the Black Sea and Kertch by the Strait of Kertch as it turns into the Sea of Azov.



Troops of the 93rd Highlanders attacking at the Battle of Alma September 20 1854. The bagpipes were used to stir the spirit of the men.

**MUSIC OR MENACE:** In 1745 the Scottish bagpipes were so identified with the cause of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his claim to the throne that they came to be regarded as instruments of sedition. They were also described by an English court of law as instruments of war.

**Balaclava Road:** Is an important harbour on the Crimean Peninsula on the Black Sea. In 1854 it was the scene of an indecisive battle in the Crimean War fought between the British and the Russians. Most memorable was the courage of the Light Brigade under Lord Cardigan. Though the British captured the Russian batteries, they were heavily shelled from all sides and were forced to retreat. The charge against a vastly superior force resulted from a blunder in the interpretation of orders. It was a tragic mistake — a veritable disaster: 247 men were killed or wounded; many were taken prisoner and 497 horses were lost. Onlookers were stunned and looked for an explanation. *We all pray that whoever is to blame may be made to answer for it.*

*One survivor to whom I spoke told me that the only circumstance to which a few who escaped owed their lives was the utter astonishment with which the enemy saw 800 Light Cavalry charging 20 000 men with artillery and both on their flanks and their faces/ Lord Cardigan, extraordinary to relate, escaped almost untouched. He charged almost by himself at the head of his brigade right up to the enemy's guns./ A shell hit one man's horse blowing up both horse and rider. \* From letters of Lt Colonel George Frederick Dallas.* Despite the disaster the British celebrated the event as a victory. The story of splendid heroism and blind devotion to duty of the 673 cavalymen was told in a ballad by Alfred Tennyson (and many years later in an American movie starring Australian Errol Flynn). On the subject French General Bosquet aptly remarked: *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!* [It is magnificent, but it isn't war!]

*Half a league, half a league, half a league onward.  
All in the valley of Death rode the six hundred.  
"Forward the Light Brigade!" "Charge for the guns!" he said:  
Into the valley of Death rode the six hundred.*

*"Forward the Light Brigade!" Was there a man dismayed?  
Not tho' the soldier knew someone had blundered;  
Theirs not to make a reply. Theirs was not to reason why.  
Theirs but to do and die.*

*Into the valley of Death rode the six hundred.  
Right through the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian reeled from the sabre-stroke shattered and sundered.  
Then they rode back, but not the six hundred.*

*Where can their glory fade? O the wide charge they made!  
All the world wondered.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade, noble six hundred!*

Stirring stuff which inspired many an Australian schoolboy to be proud of being part of the great British Empire and to grow up to volunteer to become a soldier of the Empire to take part in a similar senseless campaign as was that at Gallipoli, Turkey, in 1915 and at Somme on the Western Front. Ten days after the above disaster, the Battle of Inkermann was fought.

Incidentally, the woolen covering for head and neck which we call a balaclava originated from the Crimean War, from the place-name, Balaclava where the battle was fought. It was a garment worn by troops from the necessity to protect them from the intense cold of the Russian winter. During the winter of 1854/1855 thousands of British troops died of exposure, malnutrition and illness. One regiment, nominally some 1000 men strong, was reduced to a mere seven men by January 1855.



The knitted jacket we call a cardigan was named after Lord Cardigan (1797-1868) who lead the suicidal charge at Balaclava. Raglan refers to an overcoat without shoulder seams, the sleeves running up to the neck. This was named after Lord Raglan killed in the Crimean War in 1855.



A remnant of the British Light Brigade face to face with the Russian cavalry at the Battle of Balaclava.

**Blenheim Road and Park:** Blenheim, a Bavarian village on the River Danube, was the scene of victory in 1704 of English and Austrian troops under John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, over the Bavarians and the French. The victory effectively saved Vienna. For this service to the nation a palace was erected in Oxfordshire for the Duke and named Blenheim Palace.

The English suffered very heavy losses to which poet Robert Southey (1774-1843) truthfully and wittily refers in the last verses of his poem *The Battle of Blenheim*:

*They say it was a shocking sight after the field was won,  
For many thousand bodies there lay rotting in the sun!  
But things like that must be — after a famous victory.*

*And everybody praised the Duke who this great fight did win.  
"But what good came of it at last" quoth little Peterkin\*.  
"Why that I cannot tell," said he, "but 'twas a famous victory."*

A local Bavarian child asking why the soldiers killed one another.

**Busaco Road:** A town in Portugal, scene of a fierce battle in 1810 between British forces of 50 000 men under General Wellington and those of General Massena of France. In 1809 during the lengthy Peninsular War (1808-1814) the British had been driven from Talavera in Spain into Portugal. Pursued by the French their stand at Busaco proved victorious.

**Cabul Road:** This street no longer exists, but, up to 1907, it applied to a section of Wicks Road between present Epping and Plassey Roads. Cabul is simply an English variation of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, the scene of capture by the British in 1839 during the Afghan Wars. Two years later an insurrection broke out, culminating in the massacre of British officers. In 1879, following the murder of the British political resident, it was once again occupied by the British.

**Clive Road (E):** Named after the son of Edward Terry of Eastwood House and first Mayor of Ryde. The name Clive became very popular as a first name after Robert Clive who in June 1757 won a decisive battle in Bengal, India, to-day Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation). Clive's 3500 troops overcame a native army of 68 000 equipped with 53 cannons and 50 elephants. Ten British field pieces had more than evened the score. This was exactly 100 years before the Indian Mutiny. This victory over Prince Suraj-ud-Dowlah was more than satisfactory, because it was that powerful leader who in 1756 had crowded his English captives into the dungeon known as the Black Hole of Calcutta, where five-sixths of them died before morning. Prior to the Indian mutiny the administration of British control had been in the hands of the British East India Company. Thereafter Queen Victoria assumed the government of the whole of India.

Over the years there were understandably repeated acts of armed resistance against the imposed rule. It was almost two centuries after the Battle of Plassey that India regained its independence. Robert Clive began life as a writer in the service of the East India Company. As an imposer of rule by force of arms he might not then have believed that the pen was mightier than the sword.

**Corunna Road:** In January 1809 Corunna, a province of Spain, was the scene of a battle in which the British under Sir John Moore defeated the French. The British leader was killed during the conflict and is commemorated in the poem *The Burial of Sir John Moore* by Charles Wolfe. The day after the battle the British Fleet arrived to evacuate the troops. Nevertheless, generation after generation was reminded of the sad circumstances of haste and quiet under which their hero leader was interred:

*Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;  
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot o'er the grave  
Where our hero we buried.  
We buried him darkly at dead of night, the sods of our bayonets turning,  
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light, and the lantern dimly burning.  
No useless coffin enclosed his breast,  
Not in a sheet nor in shroud we wound him;  
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest with his martial cloak around him.  
Few and short were the prayers we said, and we spoke not a word of sorrow;  
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead  
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.  
We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,  
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,  
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head  
And we far away on the billow!  
But half of our heavy task was done when the clock struck the hour of retiring;  
And we heard the distant and random gun that the foe was sullenly firing.  
Slowly and sadly we laid him down, from the field of his fame fresh and gory;  
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone —  
But we left him alone with his glory.*

**Cressy Road:** Cressy is the anglicised spelling of Crécy, a village in northern France, noted for the great victory in 1346 during the first decade of the Hundred Years War when the English under Edward III routed a largely superior French force. The French outnumbered the English by five to one. Crécy was the first English battle in which cannon was used, but the victory was due to the shooting down of the French cavalry by the English long-bow men. The English arrows from their long bowmen outmatched the enemy crossbowmen and fell like snow among the seething masses of the attackers. That part of Cressy Road near Victoria Road Ryde was formerly known as Carpenter's Lane.

**Crimea Road:** Crimea is a large peninsula projecting from southern Russia into the Black Sea. It boasts several good harbours including Sebastopol, Balaclava and Kertch (all places the titles of roads, which see).

The name Crimea is associated with the Crimean War (1854-1855) in which the British and French fought against the Russians who had invaded Turkey in 1853. It was Russia's aim to protect the Christian subjects of Turkey who, like the Russians, belonged to the Greek Catholic faith. Turkey was aided by Britain, France and Sardinia who feared to see Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) the prize of the Russian tsars. After Russia had occupied Turkey's north eastern provinces, the British and French declared war.

They defeated Russia in Turkey and proceeded to pursue the war in the Crimea aiming at the capture of Sebastopol, Russia's Black Sea naval base. Apart from the huge losses in battles at Alma, Inkermann and Balaclava, cholera took hundreds of the invaders' lives. The mortality among the wounded was appalling, despite the efforts of Florence Nightingale and her nurses.

| MILITARY HISTORY   | IF IT'S LAUGHTER YOU'RE AFTER |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>It was during the Crimean War (1854-56). Florence Nightingale had come to the front to care for the wounded who had hitherto been treated most primitively. Three soldiers had just come into the field hospital for attention. Accompanied by an orderly on a tour of inspection, the Lady with the Lamp questioned each man in turn. <i>Now, what is your problem?</i> she asked the first. The answer came: <i>Boils on the rear. What treatment do you give for this?</i> she enquires of the orderly. The answer: <i>Wire brush and Dettol, Ma'am. Do you have any special wish?</i> she asked the first soldier. <i>Only to get back to the front and fight for the flag, ma'am.</i> The second man confessed he had V.D. <i>Now what treatment for this case?</i> asked Florence. <i>Wire brush and Dettol,</i> said the orderly. <i>And, do you have a special wish?</i> Florence asked the victim. <i>Only to be cured and fight for the flag again.</i> came the reply. The third man had an ulcerated throat. The treatment? The wire brush and Dettol, of course! Florence leaned over the third man and asked her usual question: <i>And do you have any special wish, my good fellow?</i> <i>Only one,</i> said the patient, <i>just to be treated before these other two, Ma'am. .</i></p> |                               |

**Culloden Road:** Culloden is a moor in Inverness, Scotland, which was the scene of a bloody battle in 1746 in which the English were victorious over the Scots. It was the last battle fought on British soil. Charles Edward Stuart, known as the Young Pretender, had landed in Scotland in 1745 intent on crushing the English and claiming the throne once held by his father, James Stuart. The defeat was a bitter pill for the Scots to swallow. After more than two and a half centuries many a Scot has not yet swallowed it and those that have sometimes still get indigestion.

**Delhi Road and Delhi Park:** Delhi, present capital of India, was a stronghold of the "rebels" during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 in their bid to recapture their country from the British garrisons.

The rebellion was the culmination of several factors, but was triggered by the introduction of the new Enfield rifle. Indian Sepoys refused to bite the greased cartridge bullet, an act necessary before firing. The cartridge was encased in lard, a mixture of beef fat and pig fat. Since the cow was worshipped by the Hindus and the pig was abominable to the Muslims, the sepoys refused to accept the rifle and found themselves promptly gaoled for long sentences. The remaining troops, incensed by the punishment, shot their British officers and marched to take over Delhi where there were no British troops. The city was besieged and finally captured by the British in September 1857. In the Battle of Delhi all Europeans in the city were killed or murdered from within. It was nine decades after the mutiny that India regained its independence.

*From early dawn our cannon had battered Delhi wall;  
All our men stood eager waiting for the call.*

*The Kashmir Gate had fallen, the breaches were all clear.  
Our column then moved forward amid a lusty cheer.*

*We carried gate and bastion; we captured street by street.  
The Sepoy rebels fought fiercely, defiant in their retreat.*

*Our men were spent with labour, but when the day was done,  
Delhi City was in our hands — the stronghold had been won!*

**Fontenoy Road:** By way of exception Fontenoy was a battle which the British lost — but, like Gallipoli or Dunkirk, they lost it gloriously. Fontenoy is a small town in Belgium, the scene of a battle in the War of Austrian Succession in which British-Dutch-Austrian forces were defeated by Marshal de Saxe's French army in 1745. The special feature of the battle was the stubborn and valiant conduct of the British troops.

**Gordon Street:** After General Gordon whose death in Khartoum signalled the start of the Sudan War in 1885: General Gordon was a great soldier, a military engineer, talented administrator and top field officer.

In 1877 he was appointed Governor of the Egyptian Sudan and set about a plan to open up the Nile region and the great lakes of Equatorial Africa. He also fought to stop the slave trading in the area. In 1885 the Muslim Messiah, the Mahdi, rebelled against Egyptian rule and took over the country.



Disregarding his orders to leave the Sudan, the stubborn, alcoholic Gordon decided to hold Khartoum which became besieged for ten months. When in 1885 he was killed in hand-to-hand fighting on the stairways of the government palace there was a storm of criticism against the British Government which had not sent help to rescue him until it was too late. A few months later the British abandoned its campaign against the "rebels", but in 1898 British and Egyptian forces regained control of the Sudan. The battle for Omdurman saw 10 000 Sudanese killed. The skull of the Mahdi (died 1885) entombed there was made into an ash-tray for General Kitchener. It was not until 1956 that the Sudan became a completely independent nation.

**EMOTIONAL REACTION IN AUSTRALIA:** The electrifying news of Gordon's death was generally received with shock, indignation and disbelief. For most Australians then Gordon was a hero, a warrior, a philanthropist, a missionary and now a martyr, killed by ignorant savages. A monument to Gordon's memory was set up in London's Trafalgar Square, a memorial placed in St Paul's Cathedral and prints of a painting depicting his martyrdom were to hang in schools throughout the Empire for many years to come. There began an era when people named their male babies Gordon. In Sydney there are over 40 streets bearing the name Gordon. One runs off Balaclava Road. Former Prime Minister Menzies, for example, born in 1894, was christened Robert Gordon Menzies and he lived up to the ideal of his second name by becoming one of the most loyal, almost fanatical, Empire-minded Australians in our history. In 1885, with the exception of republican-minded Irish and Scots, people generally looked at the British Empire with pride and revered its heroes. People here spoke of England as the Mother Country. They considered themselves Britishers living abroad. Indeed, it is interesting to note how easily a N.S.W. politician could commit Australian troops to a foreign theatre of war.

**ARMY DISCIPLINE:**

Sergeant to new recruit: *And you can wipe that opinion off your face!*

Without consulting parliament, the Premier, William Dalley (though of the Roman Catholic faith), expressed his loyalty to the Crown by forthwith offering a regiment of 1000 men to the Sudan. Lord Wolseley thereupon sent the following reply from the Sudan on 16/2/85 to the Governor of N.S.W.

*Please inform troops coming here that I look forward with pride  
to the honour of having Australian soldiers under my command in the field."*

Such diplomatic words from a most successful general immediately endeared him to the Australian public who had no heroes of their own at the time, except perhaps Murdoch and Spofforth, the Aussie cricketers, who had whopped the Poms at cricket in 1882 to the point of inspiring the story of the cremation of English cricket and the ashes thereof being transported to the land of the Southern Cross. Telegrams and messages of support poured in to the Premier's Office. Donations to the cause flowed in, some of them from individuals for £1000, a huge sum in those days. One ardent supporter from Mittagong, Henry Copeland, sent the following telegram to Mr Dalley: *Heartily congratulate you on offer to Old Country, though I think it illegal without the consent of Parliament, but damn the Red Tape in emergency.* Looking back, however, it was certainly no emergency, just Empire hysteria.

Although Australia consisted then of colonies, its own national characteristics were being developed. Against this were the traditional ties to Mother England, strengthened by the education system. Children learned the highlights of British history, sang songs and recited poems about a land and its environment they had never seen. The newly arrived were generally British to the bootstraps. Members of the upper crust of cultured society, especially politicians, were predominantly anglophiles. Volunteers for the Sudan came readily from all over the state, even beyond. There were four times as many as were required. The dispatch of troops to the Sudan was a spontaneous patriotic movement. It was a case of an emotional dash to war and glory. It was a chance for Australians to show what they were made of. There was even an offer of services from a number of Australian medical students from Edinburgh University. There is no doubt that, despite self-government in N.S.W. since 1856, the majority of people still felt they were British. In general, those who volunteered for the Sudan wanted to be more British than the British. The Colony of New South Wales was not even a century old at that time. They, like the British, regarded the foe as ignorant inferiors, even non-persons.

It would take nearly another century for the populace at large to proclaim themselves as Australians rather than British. The strong ties to Britain lasted right up to World War II. On March 3 1885 the 734 volunteers (522 infantry in blazing red jackets and 212 artillery in blue) plus 200 horses were farewelled from Sydney with unprecedented enthusiasm by more than 200 000 people.

The day had been declared a Public Holiday. At Circular Quay people were thrilled by the whole colourful atmosphere, enhanced by the bands playing and the singing of songs such as *Rule Britannia* and the *Soldiers of the Queen*.

*It's the Soldiers of the Queen, my lads, who've seen, my lads,  
Who've been, my lads, in the fight for England's glory, lads,  
When we had to show them what we mean.  
And when we say we've always won, and when they ask us how it's done,  
We just proudly point to everyone of England's Soldiers of the Queen.*



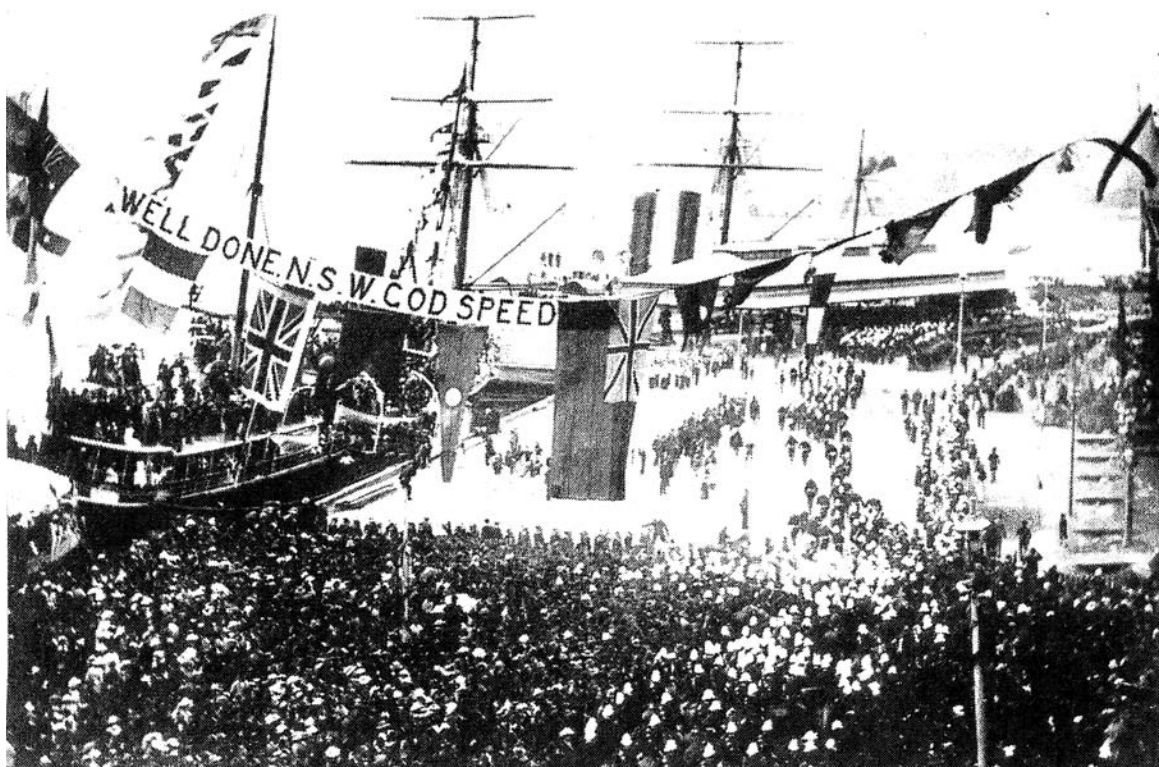
The Sudan War was a source of re-ignition of the patriotic fervour of the British and the vast majority of Australians. In schools down under children were taught mainly British history which so often glorified war; they sang British songs and learned inspiring poems about the achievements of the British and its vast empire. There was undeniably great psychological comfort in being part of the greatest empire in the world. Australians came to believe, like the British themselves, that the British were the superior race — the chosen race.

How many older generation readers were not thrilled at school by Sir Henry Newbolt's *Vitai\* Lampada* (the Torch of Life), which combined the love of sportsmanship with the heroic stand of a British regiment fighting in the Sudan?

*The sand of the desert is sodden red — red with the wreck of a square that broke;  
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead, the regiment blind with dust and smoke.  
The river of Death has brimmed his banks, and England's far, and Honour a name,  
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks: Play up! Play up! And play the game!*

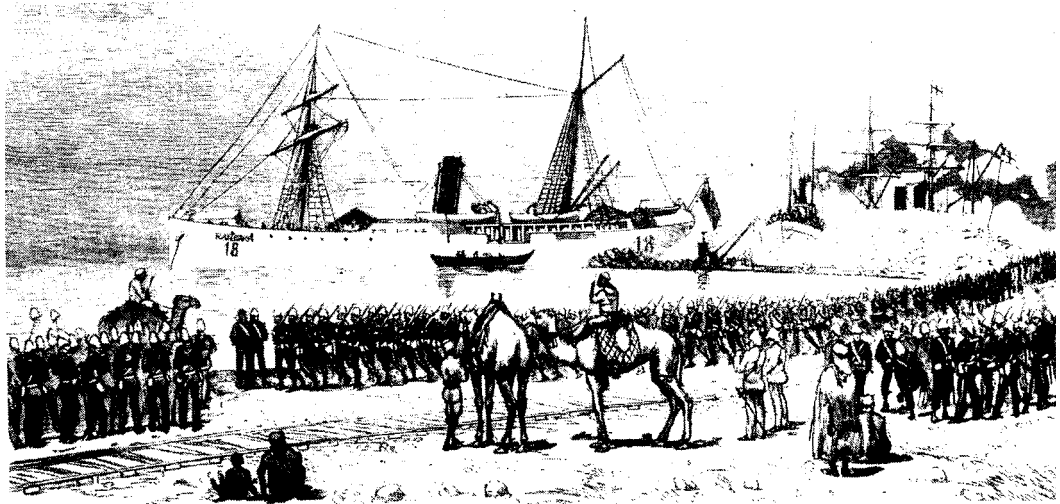
The Contingent arrived in Suakin on March 29 but, despite all the enthusiasm, saw hardly any fighting and left seven weeks later to return to Sydney on June 23, 1885.

**Graham Street (E):** Named after Britisher, Sir Gerald Graham, who was not only one of the first to receive the top award of the Victoria Cross, but also the commanding officer of the Australian contingent in the Sudan War. When he first addressed the bronzed Aussies in Suakin on the Red Sea, he welcomed them in flattering terms as *citizen warriors from a colonial democracy* and went on to say: *The eyes of all English-speaking races, and indeed those of the whole civilised world are upon you, and I am certain that you will uphold the honour of the Empire.* New South Wales responded with untold enthusiasm.



The North Shore Steam Ferry Company Limited had two splendid steamers, the 'Cammeray' and the 'Victoria' leaving no 5 Jetty Circular Quay loaded with passengers to follow the troopships, the S.S. Iberia and the S.S. *Australasian*, down the Harbour. Proceeds from the fare of 2/6 a head were generously passed on to a patriotic fund. The *Sydney Mail* of Saturday March 7 evaluated the departure day of the troops thus: *Tuesday March 3 1885 will be for ever a red letter day in the history of NSW, the day on which this colony, not yet 100 years old, put forth its claim to be recognised as an integral portion of the British Empire just as much as if it had been situated in the county of Middlesex instead of being on the very other side of the globe.*

**THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN TO AFRICA:** The journey to Suakin took 25 days during which one man broke a leg and another had a spinal injury. Discipline was strict. The penalty for drunkenness was doubled. One man was court-martialled for trying to leave his guard without leave. Found guilty he was sentenced to 28 days in prison with hard labour. After serving ten days the remainder of the sentence was remitted by Col. Richardson, the Contingent Commander. The cost of chartering the ships was £10 000 for each one. The Captain was paid a gratuity of £1000 and the Chief Officer £25.



Disembarkation of troops at the port of Suakin and passing in review before the issue of khaki uniforms. One Royal Navy rating greeted the Australians by "Hullo, Woolloomooloo!"

**MILITARY HISTORY: WOMEN IN THE WAR ZONE:** During the Sudan War the native rebels, on sighting the Scottish Regiments in their kilts actually believed that they were the wives of the English soldiers. So they hatched a plot to make a surprise raid on the "women" and carry them off. What a surprise they got from the Highlanders!

**THE ANTI-CLIMAX AND RETURN TO SYDNEY:** Though the Australians were all out for war and glory in the Sudan, there was hardly any war for them and was certainly no glory. They wasted not a jot of their powder or their shot. They were there for a very short period. The British had pulled out because of their concern about a possible Russian invasion of Afghanistan and India. In fact, the members of the N.S.W. Contingent were asked whether they would volunteer to fight in India. The answer from 315 soldiers and all but two of the officers was in the affirmative, but the situation died down and they were not needed. The British then offered to welcome a representative company of 80 men to London, but the N.S.W. government preferred all to return home. The Australians left for Sydney on May 17 and 18 after just 49 days in the Sudan. The costs of their return to Australia were paid by the British Government. The homecoming of the "glorious" volunteers was nothing like the departure.

It was a fairly gloomy affair, mainly perhaps because of rain, but also because the volunteers had had no chance to cover themselves in glory. One veteran later recalled: *Our return did not appear popular and I gathered that too many of us had come back.* It might seem that Australians only like to back winners. Their first go at an armed conflict had been an anti-climax. The *Illustrated Sydney News* of June 6 1885 put it this way: *The campaign has been brief and almost bloodless* [a War Correspondent got shot in the leg, but recovered].

*That the campaign was not more brilliant and crowned with greater victories may probably be regarded with some regret; but what more could be desired under the circumstances than that which has been accomplished. They did all they had to do and would have done more if the opposition had been afforded them. Then, surely, it must be eminently satisfactory to know that none of the soldiers have fallen victims to the spears and bullets of the wild sons of the desert. Two poor fellows have been victims to the deadly nature of the climate; but we have no maimed or wounded warriors coming home, no orphans have to mourn a father's loss, no widow's tears have to be dried.*

The return of the contingent was, by comparison with the euphoria of the departure, a lack-lustre affair, perhaps because of rain, but also through lack of action in the war. On July 29 1885, the men were feted at an official banquet in the Exhibition Hall. There were 900 men including the Governor at table and 500 ladies in the gallery.

All members of the expedition received, in addition to the Queen's medal, a bronze five-pointed star from the Khedive of Egypt. The tragedy is that some of the contingent died, not in action, but from fever. Their names appear on the Honour Roll at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

**THE AFTERMATH OF THE CAMPAIGN:** In actual fact, the Australian soldiers, so very keen for action in the Sudan, experienced hardly any fighting at all. They were involved in but one skirmish where two men were wounded. Ironically the six men in the contingent who lost their lives died of disease. Disappointment was general, with the troops themselves and with the public at large. For the enthusiastic proud patriots anxious to support the Empire, the expedition was a washout.

Already in May 1885, after Britain had decided to abandon the campaign, the Australians were embarked on a troopship to bring them home, all except those suffering from typhoid unfit to undertake the voyage. Sadly, Philip, aged 20, died and was buried at Suakin, the port on the Red Sea. Six Australians died of disease. In Columbo seven more were sufficiently affected by typhoid to be transferred to the garrison Hospital. Of these three died.

In the Sydney Road Directory the street-name Wolseley, commemorates the top British general who was on his way to rescue Gordon and who eventually, with some token help of Australian troops, put down the rebellion led by the Mahdi (literally, he who is guided, hence, the chosen one or the Messiah). Of course, we called them rebels, but they were fighting to get their own country back from the British. In retrospect, we can well ask what the British were doing in Egypt and the Sudan. They were there to look after their financial interest in the Suez Canal. They, like other European powers, were also happy to carve up Africa and annex new lands to their glorious empires. Their right to do so came solely from their military might. Their military might came from their economic might. Their economic might came from their empire-building, consequent trade and the exploitation of the resources and inhabitants of the countries in the world they had taken over in the name of their Queen.

**EVALUATION OF THE WAR:** In retrospect the Sudan Campaign was a huge waste of public money and loss of young Australian lives. To be sure, the Australian volunteers were fanatically keen to go and show what they were made of, but they were just not needed. Britain suddenly pulled out for political reasons. At least the enthusiastic offers from the other States to send troops were fortunately declined. The affair was basically all over before the Australians arrived. The British pulled out of the Sudan in 1885, but returned in 1898, when, together with Egyptian forces, they subdued the Sudanese and took over the country as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

**Inkermann Road:** To-day called Herring Road, after an earlier inhabitant and alderman on the Ryde Council. Inkermann was the site on the Crimean Peninsula, south Russia, of a British military camp which, in the Crimean War, was attacked by 50 000 Russian troops. The ensuing battle after which the Russians withdrew with the loss of quarter of their number was known as the *Soldiers' Battle*, since owing to the dense fog at the start as well as the thick undergrowth, the men fought mainly on their own initiative without instructions from their officers. A total of 17 500 men, mostly Russians lost their lives. It is unfortunate that the original battle name of this street was replaced by Herring Road. There is, however, an Inkermann Road in Denistone East adjoining Pennant Avenue.

**Kertch Road:** Named after the Russian port on the Crimean Peninsula at the northern end of Kertch Strait as it turns from the Black Sea into the Sea of Azov in Russia (which see map under entry for Crimea Road). This street originally ran off Plassey Road eastwards to the Lane Cove River, but no longer exists as such. A lane in the reserve off Riverside Drive in the Lane Cove River Park seems to follow the line of former Kertch Road but does not connect with Plassey Road.

**Lucknow Road:** This road is shown on old maps as running east of Lane Cove, crossing Pittwater Road and ending at the Lane Cove River. It took its name from Lucknow, a city in India, the scene of the defence of the British Residency by a small British force under Sir Henry Lawrence during the Indian Mutiny in 1857. The siege of Lucknow was relieved by General Havelock and his forces on September 25 1857. They were themselves in turn besieged until relieved by Sir Colin Campbell in March 1858. Though this street is no longer part of the map, the name is retained in Lucknow Park. Lucknow Road, like Sebastopol Road, was overtaken by Epping Road.

**Magdala Road:** Also spelt Magdalla, this was a stronghold on a plateau in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) 9100 feet above sea level. Being 1000 feet above the surrounding plain, it was virtually impregnable. In 1860 Emperor Theodore had taken English prisoners of war to Magdala. It was stormed by the British under Sir Robert Napier in 1868.

**Maida Road:** It was on the Plain of Maida in Calabria, the boot of Italy, that the British fought and won the battle against the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1806. This battle street is in Epping, but fairly belongs to the Marsfield planning of the subdivision of the Field of Mars Common.

**Plassey Road:** Plassey is a small village in Bengal in what was British India (to-day Bangla Desh) which was the scene of a decisive battle in June 1757 when Robert Clive's 3500 troops overcame a native army of 68 000 equipped with 53 cannons and 50 elephants. Ten British field pieces had more than evened the score. This was exactly 100 years before the Indian Mutiny. This victory over Prince Suraj-ud-Dowlah was more than satisfactory, because it was that powerful leader who in 1756 had crowded his English captives into the dungeon known as the Black Hole of Calcutta, where five-sixths of them died before morning. Prior to the Indian mutiny the administration of British control was in the hands of the British East India Company. Thereafter Queen Victoria assumed the government of the whole of India. Over the years there were understandably repeated acts of armed resistance against the imposed rule. It was almost two centuries after the battle of Plassey that India regained its independence. Robert Clive began life as a writer in the service of the East India Company. He could not have believed that the pen is mightier than the sword. Plassey Road used to go through to the Lane Cove River but now ends in the reserve.

**Quebec Road:** After the Battle of Quebec 1759, Canada — one of the epics of modern military history. After a siege and bombardment of three months the almost impregnable town was finally taken from the French by the English under General Wolfe by transferring his forces into ships, by landing and scaling the heights of Abraham thereby surprising the enemy.

Both the French General Montcalm and General Wolfe were mortally wounded during the conflict. It is said that Wolfe recited these lines of Gray's *Elegy* to his bewigged redcoats as they passed down the St Lawrence River prior to the assault on Quebec:

*The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.*

**Sebastopol Road:** During the Crimean War (1854-1856) when British and French forces fought with the Russians, the attack on the naval base and strong fortress of Sebastopol was the main feature of the conflict. After a lengthy siege of nearly twelve months the port fell in 1855. Its capture ultimately led to the end of the war. To-day there is no trace of this name as a road, for the reason that in the late 1930s the Epping Road was built over its surface. Up to 1898 there was no person listed as living here and from then just one, Thomas Wheeler, gardener. In 1909 there were three residents: Anton Rosich, Domenico Vigne and Herbert Goodsell. Letitia St Julian (nee Krix born Marsfield 1922) recalls: *In my youth the road was lined with many small native flowers. It was impassable for any sort of traffic except walking. It was all rough stones with parts washed away. It was full of ruts. It just looked like a primitive track gouged out by the early surveyors. In the late 1930s it became part of the Spooner Highway, now Epping Road. Spooner was the local member of parliament at the time, representing Ryde.*

#### **EPPING ROAD EVOLVED FROM THE BATTLES OF LUCKNOW AND SEBASTOPOL**

Opened in 1940, this highway from St Leonards to Epping was built in the last years of the Great Economic Depression instead of a long-promised and would-be more expensive railway. In 1938 during construction it was known as the Epping-St Leonards Road, but, when officially opened, it became the Spooner Highway, E. S. Spooner being the Minister of Works at that time. Following an objection to the name by the Epping Progress Association it was then called the Epping Highway. It is now Epping Road with six lanes of busy traffic.

**Simla Road:** This road in North Ryde which ran along the south bank of Kittys Creek as far as Pittwater Road no longer exists. There is a road of the same name in Denistone. Simla is a district in the Punjab on a ridge of the Himalayan foothills, formerly British India (now Pakistan), scene of a battle in the Ghurkha Wars of 1814-1816.

**Sobraon Road:** Sobraon is the name of a town in the Punjab (north west India, now Pakistan). It was the scene of the last decisive battle in the First Sikh War of 1845-46. After the British poured intense artillery onto the Sikh entrenchments, the Sikhs were forced to retreat by the Sullewj River where some 10 000 of them drowned. The British suffered considerably with 2383 killed or wounded. The *Sobraon* was also the name of a timber ship built in Aberdeen in 1866, which plied between Britain and Australia for 24 years. She carried 250 passengers and her best run London to Sydney was 68 days. In 1891 it was purchased by the New South Wales Government for £11500 and used as a reformatory ship in Sydney Harbour for delinquent boys. It was generally anchored off Balmain. In 1911 it was taken over by the Commonwealth, re-named *Tingira* (Aboriginal for *the open sea*) and used to train boys for the Royal Australian Navy.

The inmates of the reformatory were transferred to Brush Farm, Eastwood. In 1936 the ship was dismantled at Berrys Bay. Australia Post featured this famous ship on a 75c postage stamp as one of a series of clipper \* ships.

\* The tea-clippers and wool-clippers were so called because they were always intent on clipping more time off the duration of their voyage



The *Sobraon* at West Circular Quay in February 1871. She was one of the largest iron frame and timber sailing vessels ever built. The Oriental Hotel by the wharf is approximately the site of Governor Phillip's landing on January 26 1788. It was here that he raised the flag and proclaimed the Colony. In the early days of the Colony the wharf was known as the Hospital Wharf and later the Queens Wharf. — Photo by courtesy of Owen D'Arcy.

**Soudan Road:** This name, referring to the above mentioned Sudan War in which some Ryde men took part, no longer exists, but it was once applied to the North Ryde section of Lane Cove Road. The Ryde section was once called Belmore Street. Present Belmore Street (named after Australian Governor-General, the earl of Belmore, (Sir Somerset Richard Lowry-Corry 1868-1872) and Lane Cove Road, Ryde, though separated by the bus terminus, are actually in a direct line.

**Talavera Road:** A place-name in central Spain east of Toledo, the scene of a battle in which the Duke of Wellington, then Arthur Wellesley, won a decisive victory over the French under Joseph Bonaparte in 1809. See also Vittoria Road.

**Vimiera Road (E & M):** Another one of the streets named after British battles. Vimiero is the name of a village in Portugal where in 1808 the British repulsed a French army of 14000. The spelling change is due to misinterpretation of the original pronunciation. The first subdivision on land in this road was by the northern corner of Blaxland Road (formerly Sutherland Street) and either side of Bertram Street, 25 blocks in all. It was offered for sale on September 8, 1906. In October 1918 a subdivision in this road in a then rural area bounded by Vimiera, Waterloo, Crimea Roads and Pembroke Street consisted of blocks ranging from one and a half to almost five-acres.

**Vittoria Road:** Vittoria or Vitoria is a city in north-west Spain, the scene of a great battle in 1813 between the forces of Britain's Duke of Wellington and France's Joseph Bonaparte. It was a grand victory for the British. After about a century the name Vittoria seemed to be confusing some with Victoria Road. People of an allegedly less educated era seem to have managed well enough.

In 1969 the postal authorities suggested a change. Initially it was to be renamed Bennie after an alderman on the Ryde Council. There followed a strong protest by the Ryde Historical Society that the theme of battle names for the streets would be lost in this instance. A compromise was made by making Vittoria an extension of Talavera Road.

**Waterloo Road:** This road was named after the famous battle near Brussels in Belgium where the Duke of Wellington and German General Blucher combined to defeat Napoleon on June 18 1815. Right up to the time of the above forces meeting up Napoleon had driven Wellington's advanced regiments back to a ridge near Waterloo. It was while Wellington was still withstanding the great charges of the French cavalry and the French Guards that the welcome guns of the Prussians came into action on Napoleon's right front. This allowed Wellington to advance at the same time as the Prussians. Thus a dubious outcome suddenly tuned into a glorious victory.

The phrase *to meet one's Waterloo* stems from Napoleon's defeat. To the right an artist's impression of the death of the Duke of Brunswick during an indecisive battle two days before the Battle of Waterloo in the Peninsular War of 1808-1814. Only a small section of this road west of Terrys Creek lies in Epping, the major part being in Marsfield. As a matter of interest, it is thought that the word *loo* referring to a toilet comes from the association of *Waterloo with* water closet (W.C.).

#### MILITARY HISTORY

#### MAYONNAISE AND ITS ORIGIN

Table mayonnaise takes its name from a French General named MacMahon [1808-1930]. Born in France of Irish descent, General MacMahon became Marshal and finally President of the French republic. During a battle he was told he could have no sauce with his fish, because the only ingredients left were fish oil and eggs. *Then look sharp and make a sauce with them*, he said, and so *mahonnaise* [later spelt mayonnaise] named after [Mac] Mahon was born.

**Wellington Road:** The champion of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington (1762-1852), was certainly not forgotten by the street planners of the late 19th century. Having defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, the Duke gained many rewards and honours. From 1828-1830 he served as Prime Minister of his country. In North Ryde, however, his name has fallen into comparative obscurity, because the street bearing his name by the southern boundary of the grounds of the sleeping-place, the Field of Mars Cemetery, remains unused and no longer a public road.

**Wolfe Road:** After General James Wolfe (1727-1759) whose tactics won Quebec from the French in 1759. After bombarding the fortress for two months Wolfe transferred his forces by ship to the Heights of Abraham which he and his troops scaled to make a daring and successful attack on the enemy. General Wolfe and the French General Montcalm were killed during the conflict. The road still exists, but initially it ran between Strangers and Kittys Creek.

**Woronzoff Road:** This was a tiny road in North Ryde connecting Lucknow and Delhi Roads. It was rarely used and in 1935 was deleted from the map. Woronzoff (also spelled Vorontsov) was the name of a Russian Prince and the name of the road leading to Sebastopol. It was also the name of the heights on the eastern side of the Valley of Death [which see under entry for Balacalava Road] where the Light Brigade made its glorious but disastrous charge against the Russian artillery in the north. The charge was intended to be at the Vorontsov Heights where the Russians were reported to be withdrawing their guns. That was near Prince Vorontsov's hunting lodge in the area that a battle was fought by British and Turkish troops. After enduring heavy artillery fire from the Russian guns, the allied troops under Sir Colin Campbell faced a strong attack from the Russian cavalry. Campbell formed his troops into a line rather than the traditional square, whereupon the mounted enemy were driven off by musket fire.

This action became known as *the thin red line*, from a report by W. H. Russell to his readers, where he described *a thin red streak, tipped with a line of steel*.

While many of the above battles have been immortalised in paintings, poetry and film, there was one quite recent to the naming of the streets which was sought to be forgotten. That was in 1879 when the Zulus annihilated a whole British force at Isandhlwana. On that occasion the British had sorely underestimated the military prowess of the *primitive* people whose territory they had invaded and had consequently suffered an inglorious defeat. Nevertheless, the Empire's bugle-call was continued to be heard by Australians for many decades after the naming of the battle streets:

**THE MUSICAL BAND** is military in origin. In the earliest battles music was considered as a necessary encouragement to the participants. The ancient Britons used horns and trumpets against the invading Romans. The drum, ideal for marching, has also been used in war. In the battle of Quebec General Wolfe's troops were losing until he ordered the resumption of the playing of the bag-pipes. The bag-pipes date back to Biblical times in ancient Persia.

## LATTERDAY BATTLE STREETS

All of the above streets were created as government roads. Most others created in the post World War II era are private developments. With some of them came a small re-surgence of military or naval names. They are these:

**Cairo Close:** This alludes to the North African campaign during World War II when the battle for Cairo was fought. By December 1941 the Italian army had advanced into Egypt as far as Sidi Barrani. Cairo was within their grasp, when they were turned back by British forces under General Montgomery. By October 1942 the German Afrikakorps had retaken Sidi Barrani and seemed once more to be well on the way to Cairo and the Nile delta. They were stopped at El Alamein, where the fiercest of battles involving Australian troops took place. Thereafter Cairo was safe.**Libya Place:** Refers to Libya, North Africa, the scene of the Desert Campaign during World War II when, after two years of conflict, the Allied British, Australian and Empire forces finally overcame the German and Italian invaders.

**Nile Place:** Commemorates the Battle of the Nile in 1798 during the Napoleonic Wars. It was at a time when Napoleon Bonaparte hoped to invade Egypt and strike England in her most vulnerable spot — India. In Aboukir Bay, one of the mouths of the Nile, the British fleet of 14 under Admiral Nelson routed the French fleet, only two of their number escaping capture or destruction.



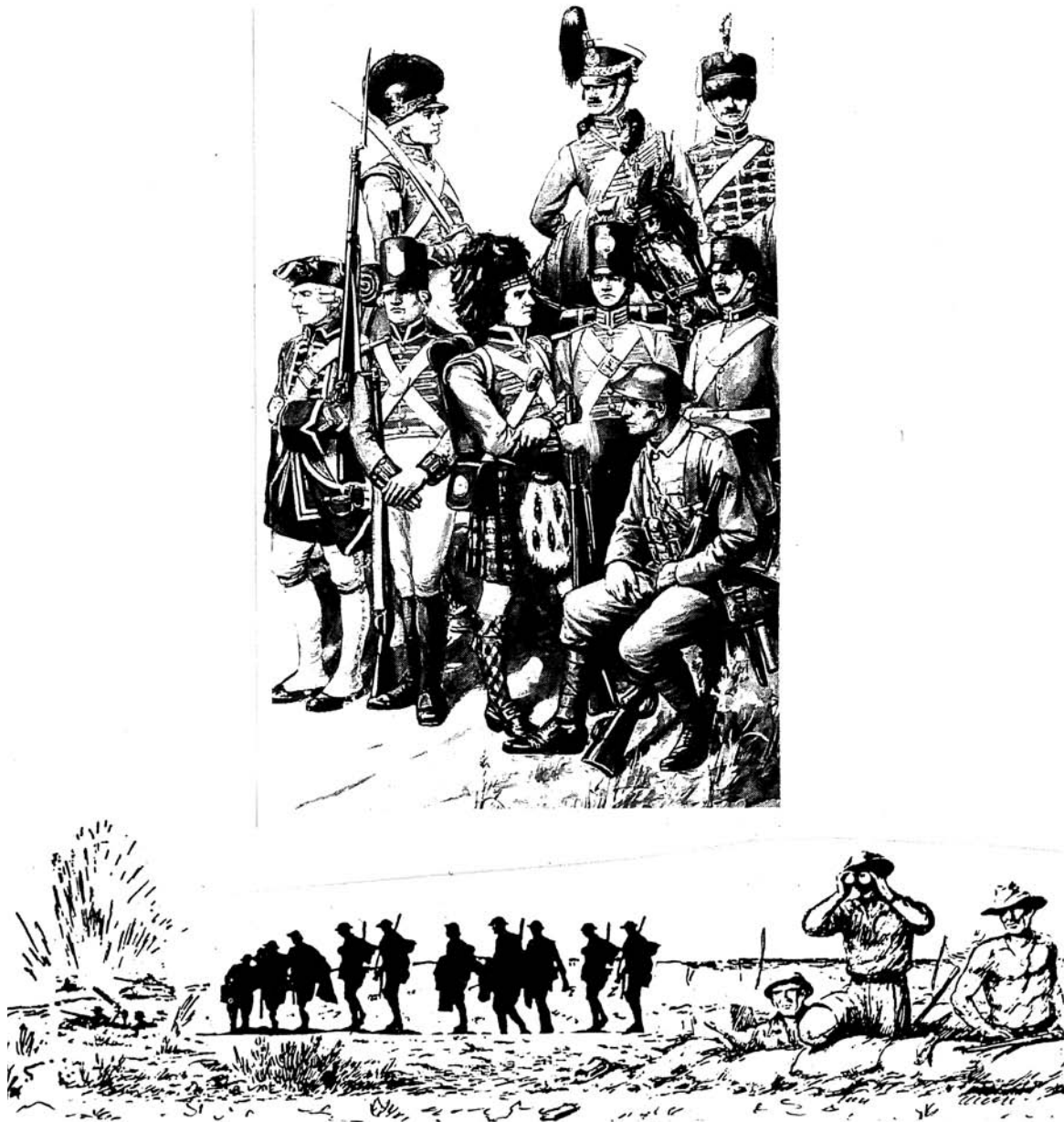
*What sounds can stir our feelings like the notes of a bugle call?  
 They set our pulses beating and thrill the hearts of all!  
 They bid us do our duty for King and country's cause  
 And e'er with all our might defend our Empire and its laws.*

**Taranto Road:** A port and a gulf *on the instep of the boot of Italy* which was the scene of the Allied invasion in September 1943 during World war II. This name, however, is said to have been named after a local Italian family.

**Trafalgar Place:** A small place commemorating a big event. In 1805 at Cape Trafalgar off the coast of Spain a British fleet of 27 ships of the line under Admiral Nelson attacked and defeated the French and Spanish fleets of 33 ships of the line. At the time the British feared that Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was about to invade their land. Nelson who was then regarded as the greatest sailor of all time came out of retirement to command the fleet. When going into battle, Nelson flew from the masthead of the flagship *Victory* the since famous signal: *England expects that every man will this day do his duty*. The British sank one ship and captured 19 along with 12 000 prisoners. In the hour of triumph the Admiral fell mortally wounded. His last words were: *I have done my duty*. The huge column erected to his memory became the feature of Trafalgar Square in London. On the right Nelson is shown receiving the swords of surrender from Spanish officers defeated at the battle of St Vincent in 1793.

In October 1979, with the sale of the old Marsfield Pottery Works in Quarry Road northside, **Buna Street** was incorporated into the estate. Buna in Papua-New Guinea was the scene of fierce fighting during the Pacific War. Its recapture from the Japanese by allied forces in January 1943 was a morale-booster for our troops and the beginning of the road to victory in New Guinea. A little to the north of Buna Street is Gannan Park built on the site of the quarry formerly used by the Marsfield Pottery Works, which, by the way gave the name to Quarry Road.

**Lavarack Street**, in Ryde, by the way, is named after Major-General J. D. Lavarack who was initially in command during the siege of Tobruk.



### **MORE MEMORIES OF THE MILITARY**

Soon after the outbreak of World War I in September 1939 Australian troops were committed to the Palestine, North Africa and Malaya. The supply of military vehicles became a priority. In 1942, following the entry of Japan into the war, the defence of Australia became vital. The U.S.A. set up its south-west Pacific headquarters in Australia and proceeded to pour men, arms and equipment into the country. Army vehicles included tanks, tractors, jeeps, trucks and amphibian 'ducks'. In the Sydney area they were stored in North Ryde on land resumed by the government bounded by Wicks, Blenheim, Epping and Cox's Roads.



### THE 3RD AUSTRALIAN ORDINANCE VEHICLE PARK 1942

Some of the hundreds of army jeeps, trucks and other military vehicles stationed in North Ryde between Wicks and Lane Cove Road and the Epping Road. Centre right stands a *Duck*, an army amphibian vehicle. — Photo by Noel Tyrrell and reproduced by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

#### HOW THE LORRY CHANGED INTO A TRUCK

Older readers will recall that up to around 1941 Australians always referred to a *lorry*, an English term. The war changed all that. Our *lorry* was changed into a *truck*. This wasn't just by accident. It actually came about by agreement between the British and the American Forces in North Africa. In order to standardise certain words which varied in British and American English, the Americans agreed to give up their ambiguous word *gas* (*gasoline*) and use the British *petrol*, while the British consented to substitute the American *truck* for their *lorry*. We heard so much about army trucks not only during the war but also after it (when such army vehicles were in hot demand by a population short of cars) that the *truck* stuck firmly with us. The Yanks, however, went back to their *gas*. The change from lorry to truck was almost imperceptible. In my youth, whenever we referred to the army vehicles parked at North Ryde, we only talked about them as army trucks and Blitz buggies. When people bought them after the war, they bought trucks. The word lorry had disappeared. Since the advent of computers, a similar language change is happening, though much more slowly. The use of nought or O is being replaced with zero.



This is not a scene of invasion during the Pacific War 1941-1945 Australia was fortunately spared invasion, but had these chariots of war ready at North Ryde for theatres of war in the Pacific. The tanks on the right, however, were captured from the Japanese. — Photo by Noel Tyrrell and reproduced by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

### **A TEST OF MATESHIP IN WARTIME**

One night in 1943 after heavy rain Private Brown is on guard duty on the Lane Cove Road approaching De Burgh's Bridge. Along comes an army jeep which he dutifully stops. He calls out in the darkness.

*You can't pass here, mate! A reply comes back: It's O.K. Private. It's me, Sergeant Friendly. I'm on my way north.*

*Well, says the guard. It's like this. There's a washaway down the road. The planks on the bridge are rotten and it's a 60 foot drop to the river. (pause) But, seeing it's you, Sarge — you can pass!*

Early during the Pacific War (1941-1945) Australia was in danger of being invaded by the Japanese. American forces under General Macarthur were based on our shores. The nation needed every available person to assist in the War Effort. Women took over men's jobs on the home front, but also joined auxiliary services attached to the army, navy and air force.



At the 3rd Australian Ordnance vehicle park camp in 1942, when many women including Private Jean Wilder, pictured here, were members of the AWA, the Australian Women's Army Service. Many of the vehicles were driven by women. — Photo by Noel Tyrrell.

In 1948, three years after the end of hostilities of World War II the War Service Housing Commission took over the land occupied by the military vehicular camp. The old army huts were first used as a Migrant Hostel until 1960, then the land was subdivided for residential purposes. The theme of military history was to be retained in this area.

This was not the first time land in the area had been considered for returned soldiers. In 1917 it was farmlets not residential blocks that were proposed: *The North Ryde Progress Association, in a desire to help the work of settling soldiers under conditions that will give returned men fair chance of earning a comfortable living investigated the North Ryde district to locate areas of crown land suitable for the purpose. It was found that there are approximately 200 acres of land of fair average quality on or adjacent to the Lane Cove River. Included in this area is the proposed new cemetery of about 140 acres designed to serve the northern suburbs.*

The plan was to accommodate 40 to 50 families on portions of about five acres each. The association appealed to the government in vain to cancel the dedication of the area to a cemetery. \* *Daily Telegraph* August 15 1917 p 7. The proposed scheme did not eventuate.

### ONLY A MEMORY OF WARTIME NOW

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941 heralding the start of the Pacific War, plans were drawn up for an emergency air strip in the North Ryde area. The strip was built running north-south parallel to Blenheim Road east of the latter. Surfaced with red gravel, it ran for a good part of a mile. A similar one was built on the flat in the Woy Woy area. Local lads who dubbed themselves the "Skid Kids" used it for racing their push-bikes. groups from Gladesville and Putney used to come and contest the North Ryders. After the war motor bikes also raced here until the Commonwealth set up army huts here to provide housing for English migrants. Thereafter the area was cleared for the building of Housing Commission cottages. Gardeners had a hard job finding the soil underneath the hard surface.

**TEASER:** *Take away my first letter and I remain unchanged. Take away my second letter and I remain unchanged. Take away my third letter and I remain unchanged. Take away all my letters and I still remain unchanged. Who am I?*  
See the answer at the bottom of this page.

### MORE STREET NAMES OF BATTLES AND WAR HEROES

In the post World War II era most streets built on the former military land between Wicks and Lane Cove Roads and Epping Highway were assigned names associated with World War II. These were different from the early British battle streets in that they were hoisting, not the British, but the Australian flag. It took a long time for the Colonials to realise that their first love was not for *the old country*, but for their native land, Australia, and for their Australian heroes .

### SOME OPINIONS ON WAR

*War is not a polite recreation, but the vilest thing in life and we should understand that and not play at war.* — Russian Leo Tolstoy in his *Peace and War* 1866. Some of us are willing — willfully, blindly, eager, mad! — to cross the sea and shoot men whom we never saw and whose quarrel we do not and cannot understand. — Henry Lawson on the Boer war, from a letter in the Bulletin

Both Edmondson and Cutler Streets, for example, commemorate Australian Victoria Cross winners. Corporal John Hurst **Edmondson** was born in Wagga in 1914 and was educated at Hurlstone Agricultural High School where a Memorial Forest was planted in 1950. The author was privileged to have been present at the ceremony. In April 1941 a party of German infantry broke through the Allies' wire defences at Tobruk in North Africa and set up a position with at least six machine guns, mortars and two small field pieces. Together with an officer and five privates, Edmondson attacked with bayonets. Seeing his officer in serious trouble, the already badly wounded Corporal came to his aid by killing his two attackers.

The officer's life was saved, but John Edmondson died later of wounds received. Throughout the operation he showed outstanding resolution and leadership and conspicuous bravery. His grief-stricken mother was presented with her valiant son's Victoria Cross in September 1941.

Lucky to escape with his life was Lieutenant Arthur Roden **Cutler** (1916-2002) who in the Syrian campaign of June-July 1941 distinguished himself by acts of outstanding bravery and leadership. He lost a leg in the process of battle. Back in Sydney he was awarded the Victoria Cross on June 11 1942. He later became a diplomat and worthy Governor of New South Wales. Collins Street commemorates naval officer Sir John Augustine **Collins** who served in World Wars I & II. He is celebrated as Captain of the *H.M.A.S. Sydney* which sank the heavy Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo Colleoni* in July 1941.

Several generals get their name on the map. Morshead Street honours Lieutenant General Leslie **Morshead** (1889-1959) was in command of the Australian forces in Tobruk during the siege of Tobruk in North Africa.

Blamey Street is named after General Sir Thomas **Blamey** (1884-1951) who was the General Officer Commanding the Sixth Division in the Middle Eastern campaign from 1940 and Commander of the Land Forces in Australia during the Pacific War (1941-1945). In 1950 he was appointed Field-Marshal, Australia's first, eight months before his death.

Sturdee Street commemorates Lieutenant General V.A. **Sturdee**, the chief of the Australian General Staff in 1942. After the fall of Singapore in February of that year, it was Sturdee who advised the Prime Minister, John Curtin not to send Australian troops to Burma as urged by both British Prime Minister Churchill and USA President Roosevelt. The decision to retain the force in Australia soon proved to be so wise, as the Japanese bombed Darwin soon afterwards.

Rowell Street is named after Sir Sydney Fairbairn **Rowell**, commander of Australian forces in New Guinea in 1942 when the Japanese suffered their first defeat in the Pacific War at Milne Bay.

**Berryman Street** honours the name of Frank Horton Berryman who saw service as Brigadier in Lebanon in the early part of World War I and then as Major-General in New Guinea during the Pacific War.

**Ryrie Street** takes its name from a famous Australian soldier and politician, Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie (1865-1937). He served with the Mounted Rifles in the South African War and commanded the 2nd Light Horse Brigade at Gallipoli and Palestine during World War I. By 1919 he had risen to the rank of Major-General.

**Chauvel** Street honours the name of General Henry Chauvel whose background is explained by the following:

#### THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE

When World War I came along, the Australian Light Horse Regiments proved to be ideal for the Middle East campaigns, in the Sinai and Palestine. Most famous is their 7000 yard (3 km) charge to capture Turkish-held Beersheba and its wells holding 400 000 gallons of precious water to still the thirst of parched men and horses. That took place on October 1917. It was the greatest successful cavalry charge in military history and, because of the changes in military warfare since, destined to be the last. Holding fixed bayonets before them like cavalry swords, the light horsemen fearlessly charged the Turkish entrenchments. The sight of this, coupled with their reputation in Gallipoli as awesome warriors, is said to have unnerved the Turkish defenders whose shots largely went over the heads of the oncoming light horsemen. The first wave hurdled the double line of fortified trenches and swept on to Beersheba, while the second wave, after crossing the fortifications, dismounted and overwhelmed the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting. 1000 Turks were taken prisoner. Australian casualties totalled 63 (31 killed and 32 wounded). A captured German officer complained: *The Australians are not soldiers. They are madmen!* Of the charge at Beersheba a British General was heard to remark: *Trust the bloody Australians to charge a town with the word beer in its name.* The humour of the Light Horsemen was typically Aussie. The emu feathers they wore on their slouch hat they called kangaroo feathers. In 1942 Charles Chauvel, film producer and director, made a splendid film about this unique cavalry success led by his uncle, Henry George Chauvel, at that time Lieutenant-General Chauvel. *40 000 Horsemen*, feting the audacious mounted Aussie diggers, appeared in cinemas in 1942, at a perfect time to boost the national morale during the dark days of the Pacific War.

If the above story of the Australians in Palestine during World War I brought fame to the quality and courage of Australia's fighting men, it was their actions during the siege of **Tobruk** in the North African campaign of 1940-43, which won them the greatest praise. In 1941 Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the Afrikakorps were sent by Hitler to bolster their despairing Italian allies in North Africa. The port of Tobruk became the focal point of the Germans' massive attack but 30 000 previously untried Australians of the 9th Division, held the fortress under siege for 242 days before they were relieved. 749 Australians had been killed, 1996 wounded and 612 captured. Tobruk was another decisive battle in which 25 000 Italian prisoners were taken. For 242 days the key coastal port was under siege by Rommel's crack Afrikakorps. Until they were withdrawn, the Australians dug in around the perimeter of the town successfully, defying repeated Panzer attacks. Enemy radio derogatorily dubbed them the *Rats of Tobruk*, a title the Aussies enjoyed and later made a movie with this title.

**FROM A LOCAL LAD WHO SURVIVED THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK**

*In all the Aussie papers that have chanced to pass my way  
It seems that every Digger returning home must say  
That he's a gun-scarred warrior who went through Greece and Crete,  
Who saw the show in Syria and braved the desert's heat.  
They never missed a battle; when things were really crook  
And there's not a man among them who wasn't in Tobruk.  
Well, they can have the limelight, though some have got it free,  
But if they're the veterans of Tobruk, then who the hell are we?*

**Kokoda Street** is named after the Kokoda Track in Papua. This was a primitive mountain track about 240 miles long across the lofty Owen Stanley Range linking Port Moresby with the village of Kokoda. During the Pacific War (1941-1945) the Japanese had advanced along the rugged terrain of the Track and were threatening Port Moresby — which, if captured put them within cooee of the Australian mainland. At a point some 32 miles from the Port, the enemy was stopped and gradually pushed back by Australian troops. Though the word *track* is essentially preferred by Australians, the Papua New Guinea Government decreed in 1973 that the official name was the Kokoda Trail, *trail* being the American usage. When our militia (non-volunteers) fought on the Kokoda Track, at Milne Bay and other parts of New Guinea, it marked the first time that conscripts had served outside of the mainland. It was in January 1939, in pre-war days, that the Defence Act was extended to cover Papua-New Guinea.

**HOW THE LORRY CHANGED INTO A TRUCK**

Up to 1941 Australians referred to a *lorry*, an English term. Our *lorry* changed into a *truck* by agreement between the British and American Forces in North Africa, during World War II. The Americans agreed to use the term *petrol* instead of their *gas* [short for *gasoline*] while the British consented to change from *lorry* to the American *truck*. The *truck* stuck firmly in our usage, but the Yanks went back to their *gas*.

When real estate agents were keenly supervising surveyors sub-dividing a farmland in North Ryde, one young fellow came upon a sign on a post. It read:

TOTI  
E  
HORS  
ESTO

As a former student of school Latin and French, he recognized TOTI as all men, HORS as French meaning *out of* and the last word looked like part of the verb to be in Latin. To answer his curiosity as to the whole meaning, he duly rang the Classics Department at the University of Sydney, who informed him that the sign was not in Latin at all, but in English and simply read:

TO TIE HORSES TO.

**Truscott Street** commemorates the name of red-haired war hero, Squadron Leader Keith 'Bluey' Truscott who was in charge of the 76th Squadron at the battle of Milne Bay when for the first time during the Pacific War (1941-1945) the Japanese were repelled. *Some of us may forget that of all the Allies it was the Australians who first broke the spell of the invincibility of the Japanese Army.* — Field-Marshal William Slim, Governor-General 1953-1970.

If our success at Milne Bay in September 1942 had a tremendous effect on the morale of both nation and troops, imagine what it did to the morale of the hitherto victorious enemy who planned to use it as an air base from which to launch attacks on Port Moresby and Australia and eventually to undertake the invasion of the Great South Land. To be sure, the victory at Milne Bay was the turning of the tide in the Pacific War. Unfortunately, in 1943, during a training exercise over the Exmouth Gulf in Western Australia, our No 1 air ace died when his *Kittyhawk* crashed into the sea.

Both **Betty Hendry Parade** and **Farrington Parade** honour the names of two stalwart members of the Ryde Patriotic Fund, Betty Hendry of West Ryde and Mary Farrington who worked so zealously for the benefit of those serving overseas during World War II. Paul Sheering (born 1946), whose father John (1921-1983) served in the Air Force remembers well the day in 1955, August 5, that his family moved into their newly built War Service home in Ryrie Street, that the houses in the above two streets were already occupied.

**Hearnshaw Street** is called after local State parliamentarian Eric Hearnshaw, M. L. A. while **Chisolm Street** honours Dame Alice Isobel Chisolm (1856-1954) who was a welfare worker especially for soldiers during World War I.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE MEMORIAL GARDEN

A small brick memorial and garden is maintained by the North Ryde RSL Sub-Branch on the corner of Magdala and Pittwater Roads, North Ryde. The garden is planted with roses in memory of members of the Sub-Branch prior to 1982. The memorial is a general one to those who served in both World Wars I and World War II.

## TIMES PAST



The way it used to be on the eastern side of Lane Cove Road between the Epping Highway and Waterloo Road. — Courtesy of Ryde Historical Society

In conclusion, let us join the thoughts of an ex-pupil, Billie [Hicks] Stuart, who so loved her time at North Ryde School:

### RELECTIONS

*What made them, those wonderful years?  
What made them warm memories forever?  
Was it just being close to your loved ones  
Laughing, living and sharing together?*

*Frosty mornings when outside all crackled  
With cold, when all woke for the day;  
The animals all blowing smoky balloons  
As they jostled and snuffled the hay.*

*And down by the creek bubbling onwards,  
Over flattened down rocks to the pool  
The tea-trees are festooned all silver and white,  
With spider webs crystal and cool.*

*Over the way the apple trees stand there,  
Pale masses of pink in the mist;  
The sun soon comes out to dry them anew  
Awaiting the bees' honey kiss.*

*The feel of the warm glowing firelight  
In the silence of grace before tea,  
Then the babble of talk to our parents  
Telling all, tumbling words out so free.*

*What made them, those wonderful years?  
What made them warm memories forever?  
Was it just being part of a wonderful world,  
Of our home, dear father and mother?*



It is 1932. Our smiling cyclist has just come home from his favorite school.

**LAST LAUGH:** Some pupils were always having problems with the words *ammonia* and *pneumonia*, no doubt because of the English pronunciation of the latter word of Greek origin. [As one teacher put it, the pee is silent as in 'surf-bathing'.] The teacher proceeded to illustrate the difference simply by stating that *ammonia* they keep in bottles but *pneumonia* they keep in chests.

## THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE



### BIRTHDAY—FIRST SCHOOL DAY—HAPPY DAY

Creeping like snail unwilling to school? Not in this case! Triplets, Megan, Janet and Pauline Law, born in Ryde Hospital in 1961, as they hasten from home at No 25 Makinson Street, seem that they just cannot wait to attend their first day at Gladesville Public School on May 24 1966, their fifth birthday. — Photo by courtesy of Megan Cumerlato (nee Law).

Schooldays, it is said, are the happiest days of your life. There are many who may not agree. Nevertheless, everyone must have benefited in some way by attending school. Being able to read and write is a most valuable basic asset in life. Time was, however, when there was no school in Gladesville. When Walter Campbell, son of the Superintendent of the Gladesville Asylum, was a boy in the 1850s, there was no local school of any kind, so he was sent to St Phillip's School at the Rocks, also Sydney Grammar, and afterwards attended the National School at Fort Street near the present Sydney Harbour Bridge. His was a long day and at times tiring. In order to pay for his passage on what must have been a private boat that plied the Parramatta River, he had to steer the vessel all the way from Tarban Village to the city and back. He therefore enjoyed a marine as well as a formal education. It was an effort but a privilege to go to school:

*I joined the Sydney Grammar School on the opening day, being the eleventh or twelfth pupil on the roll. As a river steamer left Sydney at four o'clock p.m. and a later one not until 6 p.m., the two or three pupils residing on the river were permitted to leave at 3:45 p.m.. The school closed at four. As the Phoenix Wharf was more than a mile away from the school, the boys generally ran across Hyde Park, then a bare miserable place — the fig trees had not been planted — and sometimes they ran some distance along the streets. To make matters worse for residents beyond Hunters Hill, the morning steamer which left Bedlam Point to get to school in good time two boys and a Gladesville resident had to walk to Mr Huntley's house [on Huntley's Point] and Mr Huntley kindly took them to the Hunters Hill wharf in his boat to catch the steamer. \* The Parramatta River and its Vicinity 1848-1861 by W.S.Campbell Royal Australian Historical Society Vol V Part VI 1919 p. 282-3.*

#### FIRST FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT

The earliest schools in the Ryde area were denominational, that is, conducted by religious denominations such as the Church of England, the Roman Catholic and the Baptist Churches. Ryde, about halfway between Sydney Town and Parramatta, actually the third place of settlement in New South Wales, was comparatively slow to gain a Public School. Many country centres had established State schools years well before Ryde opened in 1868. Kempsey, for example opened in 1848 and by 1851 there were already 37 government schools. Until the late 1860s Ryde was known as Kissing Point.

#### WHEN RELIGION WAS A BIG ISSUE

Initially, education for children was undertaken by the Church, not by the State. Up to 1860 schooling in Australia remained tightly in the grips of the various religious denominations, but with the Education Act of 1866 the Government took control of two educational systems, one Denominational and the other State. Then, in 1880 Sir Henry Parkes, longtime champion of education for all, rich or poor, pushed forward an Education Act which cut off government aid to Denominational Schools. This naturally caused much storm and stress in religious circles, so much so that a joint pastoral letter on education (actually formulated in 1879 through Roman Catholic Archbishop William Bede Vaughan) stated this stark warning: *We condemn Public Schools because they contravene the first principles of the Christian Religion; and secondly, because they are seed plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness, being calculated to debase the standard of human excellence and to corrupt the political, social and individual life of future citizens.* During the debate which ensued for years David Buchanan, M.L.A., maintained that if the Roman Catholics were given a share of the education vote that they claimed, the Chinese, for example, would also demand a share. He further put forward the inflammatory argument:

*The God in the Chinese joss-house is made of wood; the God worshipped in the Roman Catholic joss-house is made of flour and water. Which is the more barbarous of the two?* Subsequently the Public School system flourished under the catch-cry that education should be free, secular (that is, not religious) and compulsory. Schooling for all, even for those in remote country areas, became a reality.

The earliest school in the district was the Hunters Hill Parochial School which operated from 1838 to 1873. It was not in present-day Hunters Hill but in Victoria Road Ryde. This school was so named because it was in the Parish of Hunters Hill long before the name of Ryde was adopted for the area. It was conducted under the auspices of St Anne's Church of England. In 1858 it was described as a brick building with shingled roof, well ventilated and neatly whitewashed. Desks were fixed to the wall along two sides of the schoolroom. There was a master's residence consisting of two rooms attached at the rear, an excellent garden and the situation was described as very healthy and pleasant. The school population fluctuated considerably. In 1858 there were 102 enrolled (including 16 Wesleyans and 16 Roman Catholics). In 1861 the number had dropped to 44.

The next school, also a denominational institution, was St Ann's [later St Anne's] which operated from 1874 to 1879, but eventually the paucity of pupils meant the demise of the school. It was closed by the Council of Education on July 31 1879. Whereas the Church of England School had closed, the Catholic School, St Charles, survived and has thrived to the present day. In February 1867 when St Charles denominational school applied for certification, it was said to have been operative for eight years, hence since 1859. In 1867 there were only 17 pupils on the roll (under the required minimum of 25), but the Council of Education tolerated the school's continued existence. By 1868 the enrolment was up to 35. Surprisingly 16 of the pupils were Protestants, who no doubt lived in the vicinity. In 1878, when Gladesville already had its own public school, some 92 pupils were enrolled.

#### CURIOSITY: THE LETTER AITCH

In the English alphabet the eight letter, H, is pronounced *aitch*. Some people, however, do pronounce the letter as *haitch*. This is generally a hangover from education by Irish priests in the 19th century.



A schoolmaster collecting fees from pupils in 1874. Teachers in Denominational schools mostly depended on fees collected and therefore welcomed high enrolments and regular attendance. Fees at this time ranged between 6d and 1/- per pupil per week with reductions for families. The fee was fixed by the Local School Board which had the power to recommend exemption of fees for children whose fathers were unemployed. On the other hand, those who did not pay could be sued, as was the case in December 1868 when teacher J.C.Browne at the Hunters Hill Parochial school recommended that debtors Messrs Morgan and Hare, who were considered to be well able to pay, be taken to Court.

The first public school in the Ryde municipality was that of Ryde which operated from July 1868. The push for a Public School began in April 1862 when a public meeting of parents and citizens was held in Tucker's Inn. The National School system had been introduced to the State in 1848 and William Wilkins, Inspector of National Schools who had devised the system, attended the gathering. A School Committee was duly formed and with 458 children in the area it seemed that a National School was essential. In those days people had to struggle to gain for their community things which to-day we take for granted. The wheel of progress turned slowly. It was not until 1867 that the strongest petition for a Public school for Ryde was made, a petition which included a sweetener, namely, a local contribution of £100 guaranteed by J.S.Farnell, E.Drinkwater, G.Wicks, W.Small and J.Devlin, of which names four are commemorated in street names in the Municipality. An inspector investigated the claim for a school and noted the following: *Several of those who support the school are in easy circumstances, but the majority belong to the labouring and more independent class.* The school was approved.

On July 6 1868 classes began in a building on the corner of present Tucker Street and Blaxland Road (then Parkes Street, the present Parkes Street from Belmore Street being earlier called Rabbit Street). To-day the site is occupied by offices. Formerly Stanley's Inn, this dilapidated stone edifice with shingle roof, decidedly the worst-looking building in town, was very dark in winter and quite unsuitable for schooling. Nevertheless, the Council of Education, always strapped for funds, paid £280 for the site of ten acres and proceeded to convert the building to provide three classrooms. Initially 69 pupils, of whom some came from Gladesville, were enrolled. Bill Spies (born Gladesville 1931) recalls from his family history: *Because there was no school in Gladesville my grandmother, Charlotte Small (1862-1944), had to ride a pony up to Ryde.*

## GLADESVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

*Strive to Excel*

Public School from February 1879 / Central School from 1944 / Public School from 1956

Main Source: State Archives School Files 1/15997

Up to 1879 there were two private schools in the vicinity, but most school-age boys and girls in the Gladesville area had to trek along muddy or dusty roads to schools in either Ryde or Hunters Hill. In 1878 North Ryde had opened and approval for the establishment of Gladesville Public School had been granted. The Local Committee petitioning successfully for the school, consisted of James Martin, James Frazer, William Cowell, William Coulter and Robert Pearson, the last three being commemorated in the names of local streets. The main reasons expressed for the establishment of a local school were the imminent crossing of the Parramatta by the Gladesville Bridge, the planned sale of the Field of Mars Common adjoining Gladesville and extensions to the Gladesville Hospital, all of which would inevitably bring more population to the district. In January 1878 the Council of Education purchased land fronting Great North Road (now Victoria Road) and a building for 102 pupils as well as a teacher's residence were built ready for occupation in February 1879. The first teacher appointed was J.Bayliss. Average attendance for the first year was 56.4 pupils.

### PUBLIC HOUSE BY SCHOOLHOUSE: ODD DECISION IN VICTORIAN AGE

To-day applications for the establishment of liquor licences in hotels and taverns can be rejected on several scores, particularly if a public house is sited near a school and the police have objections. When we now look at the position of the Bayview Hotel almost smack bang next to the Gladesville Public School, we might wonder how on earth a licence could have been approved. In February 1879 John Martin unsuccessfully applied for a licence for premises near the school. Of course, the Local School Board had strenuously opposed the application on the grounds that a Public House near a Public School would lead to the demoralising of the scholars, and such a house is not required for the accommodation of the Public. In April 1879 when John Martin appealed against the decision, one of the Magistrates, J.K.Heydon, curiously suggested that, to prevent objection in future, the next application might be made by his brother, James, and that once the licence was granted, it could easily be transferred. Why such counsel should be given by a Magistrate in the strict Victorian age and in the face of public opposition is difficult to fathom. Accordingly, brother James Martin, shoemaker and himself a member of the School Committee which had petitioned for establishment of the school, made application. On June 2 1879 at the Ryde Court he appeared before a bench of four Magistrates (Blaxland, Heydon, Manning and Linsley) and in the presence of an Inspector from the Council of Education and its solicitor. Constable Dove, who had previously objected to John Martin's application, expressed his satisfaction with the character of the applicant. A majority decision found in favour of the application. Despite the superficial niceties of the Victorian age, society in general was still ridden with an addiction to alcohol.

#### ACCENT ON THE NEGATIVE

The local parson, a man of few words, one day visited the teacher at his residence.

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A cup of tea, Reverend? | No tea, thank you.!    |
| A cup of coffee ?       | No coffee, thank you.! |
| A cup of cocoa ?        | No cocoa, thank you !  |
| Whisky and water ?      | No water, thank you.!  |

Life in general was never easy. Outbreaks of infectious diseases like diphtheria were not infrequent. School conditions were, by to-day's standards very poor. In 1888, for example, Mr Bayliss reported on the water in the school tank which was the only source available to the children: *The water is totally unfit for use. The smell arising from it is most injurious. I removed ten dead frogs and two dead rats all covered with slime out of it on Saturday. Some weeks later, when nothing had been done, I removed another five dead frogs from the tank. For the last six weeks we have had to get water for the school from a neighbour, but he cannot let us have it for much longer.*

#### HOW PRECIOUS IS EDUCATION ESPECIALLY FOR THE POOR

When parents could not afford to pay school fees, they would have to make application for the cancellation of arrears. In genuine cases the Department sanctioned cancellations. One such case was that of George Miles. His letter below is reproduced here with its imperfections, in no way to belittle the poor fellow, but to highlight his lack of education and his desire for better education for his children. *I have the honor to apply for cancel of debt dew to me to the Minister of Public Instruction on the grounds that I have been ill suffering from Bronctutes for the last four months and had also to kepp and tew an aged mothr threwut her last illness to her death.* Mr Miles was a stonemason, normally earning 8/- a day, but currently out of work. He was a widower with five children and had recently lost not only his mother, but also a child. He was living in extreme poverty and the people of the village were raising a subscription to support him and his family. The school fees were waived.

#### AH! THOSE GLORIOUS YEARS AT SCHOOL

Modern parental thought: To be sure, schooldays are the happiest days of your life — providing your children are old enough to attend, that is.

#### SOME TALES OUT OF SCHOOL OF LONG AGO

Now to tell a couple of tales out of school, tales from the distant past, tales which, in their day, might have been rather sensational. They derive from the records held by the State Archives contained in School Files. For reasons of privacy the records are limited to more than 50 years ago. Aside from the general human interest that they generate, they serve to inform us about former times, about the conditions of school and the lives of pupils, parents and teachers. Nearly all of us have one life-experience in common, that is, going to school. Despite many changes in our society since schools began, despite better amenities all round, despite improved teaching and learning methods, despite all the materials provided by modern technology, there is a certain sameness about school which we can feel, whatever our age may be. The one common denominator is that we were all young then. Of course, we all remember different things, some of us with relish, some of us with regret. Some of us look back nostalgically at those glorious years; others consider school as the place they were so glad to get out of. There were teachers we liked and others we hated. There were subjects in which we excelled and others in which we performed poorly. Whether we went joyfully or unwillingly to school, we were certainly all extremely sensitive about any injustice on the part of any pupil or teacher. In the society of school we all experienced, perhaps for the first time, the realities of life. We came to know how different people are, in hygiene, in dress, in behavior, in thinking, in morality, in character, in religion and so on. It was certainly a gradual acquaintance, but, when you come to think about it, it must have been a rather bewildering exposure to the full facts of life. A lot depended on the school we attended, on the pupils and teachers with us and on the attitudes of our parents.

While the tales that follow are about actual incidents that occurred at school, we must remember that those incidents were not everyday but isolated events. Nevertheless, they are highly informative and reveal many aspects of human behavior.

#### A CASE OF INCOMPATIBLE COLLEAGUES

Training and controlling pupils of all different abilities, personalities and parental influence were difficult enough in themselves for any teacher including the Headmaster, not to mention problems of vermin in the school tank, but when he also experienced difficulties with a member of staff, he had recourse to contact his superiors at Head Office. On September 9 1888 he wrote about a teacher, Miss Manning, concerning constant complaints from parents about her beating their children. Mr Bayliss expressed his frustration in her reluctance to discontinue such practice in spite of his specific verbal and written instructions, further for ignoring his directions in other matters such as arriving at school on time at 9 a.m., not as she did 15 or 20 minutes later. He also criticised her for sitting or leaning instead of standing up to teach [which was regulation].

The Head enclosed a sample letter from an irate parent, the local Presbyterian Minister, Mr Smeaton, who complained about Miss Manning's cruelty on his little daughter, six years old: *Yesterday the lady in question struck her over the head with her cane, inflicting a severe blow so much so that she [the daughter] has been complaining ever since. I have no objection to her being caned as long as it is done legitimately on the hand.* Other parents, namely Martin, Kirk and Cottis had also complained about the lady teacher. When officially asked for an explanation, Miss Manning expressed her complete surprise at the allegations, maintaining that she had never had any previous complaints and denying that she had struck the Smeaton child on the head. She asserted that Mr Bayliss was unkind to her and that he was trying to get rid of her. An inspector investigated and considered that Miss Manning was somewhat indiscreet and had overstepped the mark, but that both parties were incompatible. Miss Manning was removed, that is transferred [presumably inflicted on another school].

#### CAUSTIC CRITIC OF THE BUREAUCRACY LASHES OUT

On March 17 1890 Mr J. Turner contacted the Minister of Education in writing. He referred to him the matter of his injured son, Claude, who had fallen from a structure erected in the school playground some six months earlier and though improving under the care of a doctor, had contracted a hip-disease as the result of the fall. To quote Mr Turner's exact belligerent words: *I would like to know if it is a proper thing and in accordance with the regulations to have circus appliances placed within reach of children attending school.* The Minister seemed sympathetic and naturally called for an explanation from the school. In reply Mr Bayliss, already more than ten years in charge there, was somewhat mystified, stating that the accident could have happened without his knowledge. He described Mr Turner's circus appliances as a gymnasium set up for the benefit of the children, consisting of a pair of parallel bars two foot six inches high and claimed that no accidents had been reported from the use of the equipment.

On being informed of this response, Mr Turner submitted some rather searching questions? *Why had the bars been subsequently removed? What happened when Leslie Folkard went to the school to enquire about the accident?* [Apparently young Turner had been living with the Folkard family because his father was away from Sydney and had no mother.] *Why was I not informed about the accident? Was not the whole matter hushed up?* The Department became more concerned, no doubt wondering whether the school had been negligent in its duties to the child and his angry father. The school was asked to provide satisfactory answers to the pressing questions. Mr Bayliss explained that the bars had been removed to make way for a school garden, that the pupil-teacher in charge of Claude Turner at the time was unaware that the lad had suffered an accident and consequently there was never any reason to inform the father. The idea of a cover-up was positively denied. Being informed of the answers to his questions, Mr Turner became more irascible, claiming that his boy had fallen from a structure other than the parallel bars, from a height of seven foot from the ground. He asked for an interview with the Minister and to see for himself the reports from the school.

The Minister received Mr Turner in July 1890 and showed him the full reports on the matter. Though the meeting was amicable, Mr Turner remained dissatisfied. The Minister, still quite sympathetic, promised to look further into the matter. Accordingly, an Inspector was sent to investigate. The latter first interviewed the injured boy who named four boys who witnessed his accident. The inspector repaired to the school to quiz both staff and pupils. Three of the boys denied Claude's story. The fourth one had already left the school. The inspector concluded: *It is clear that the boy did not fall at the school. Therefore the parent has no legal or moral claim on the Department. It seems likely that the lad had a fall elsewhere, perhaps doing something very foolish, which he was reluctant to reveal to his father, that he had stuck so steadfastly to his story about the accident happening at school that it had become a reality to him.* Mr Turner was duly informed about the inquiry made.

## THOSE IRATE PARENTS



## AS THEY ARE



## AS THEY THINK THEY ARE



## AND AS THEY APPEAR TO THE UNFORTUNATE "CHALK"

### ON THE SUBJECT OF I.P.S (IRATE PARENTS)

There have always been and always will be irate parents. Full consultation between parents and school authorities is the only way to get to the truth of a matter which causes ire. Most times it is a logical chain of events: the teacher gets angry, the pupil gets angry and then the parents get angry. Pupils are not always the angels they appeared to be in the perambulator. Are there no more naughty children to-day? Are there no more half truths told at home by troubled pupils to sympathetic parents? Is the teacher at fault? Is it the system that is failing? Or is it that the child is guilty of a breach of discipline? Is communication so good to-day that there are no more irate parents? The teacher to-day has a difficult job, handling young human beings of varied abilities, different cultures and family backgrounds. No teacher is ideal, but in the 19th century, the National Board of Education considered this: *A teacher should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper and discreet. A teacher should be imbued with a spirit of peace, of obedience to the law and loyalty to the Sovereign, and should not only possess the art of communicating knowledge, but be capable of moulding the minds of youth and giving a useful direction to the power that education brings.*

Time passed. In January 1891 the boy had a relapse and had to undergo an operation. In a stinging letter of February 2 1891 an ireful Mr Turner fired a broadside at the Minister: *I beg to remind you that I did place some reliance on your word that you would do what you could for me, but you deceived me.*

The ensuing inquiry was a farce. Just fancy getting any persons to condemn or abuse the system under or over which they exist as Public Servants or Masters. The parent was now taking the Minister himself to task — not the most diplomatic thing to do. He further alleged that the pupil witnesses who denied any knowledge of the accident having taken place at school had been intimidated. He pursued the matter even further: *I intend to bring this matter under public notice and also before Parliament next session and try and show how a boy may be crippled and the Public Servants or Masters cannot be relied upon.*

The Minister replied to Mr Turner's acrimonious attack by describing his attitude as disrespectful and abusive. On February 28 1891 Mr Turner manoeuvred for what was to be the last salvo of the battle: *As my correspondence is, in your estimation disrespectful and abusive, and so presents an excuse for you to have done with me, I beg to inform you that, although you may be done, I have only started and that, when I have put my story before your masters at the ballot-box, I can await the result with confidence and may you then be "done to as you have done to others". I've endeavoured to bring under your notice how my boy has been made a cripple and perhaps ruined for life, and as a natural result, what money I had has nearly vanished in endeavouring to cure him; how this has originated in the mad desire of making circus clowns instead of scholars and yet you shut your eyes and will not or can not see it. The questions I asked have not been answered.* This attack was the final straw for the Minister who decided to take no further action in the war. Whether Mr Turner carried out his threat to publicise the matter and contact Parliament is not known.



Earliest photo of Gladesville Public School sited hard by the Great North Road, possibly on the occasion of the opening of the school in 1879. When Victoria Road was widened, this original building was demolished. — Photo by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

#### **HEADMASTER IN MORE STRIFE THAN NED KELLY**

Mr James Godfrey came to Gladesville as Headmaster in July 1896 and saw years of good progress of the school. He was generally highly thought of by the community as well as by the staff and pupils under his charge, but there were some parents whom he could never win over and who, it seems, cooked up a conspiracy to cut down what they must have conceived as a tall poppy. Late in 1898 complaints from several parents began to pour in almost simultaneously about Mr Godfrey.

On December 12, for example, Miss Florence Colvin stated officially: 1. *Mr Godfrey struck my sister Frances across the shoulders with a cane, the bruises lasting for three weeks.* 2. *He called her insulting names on several occasions — a mad fool, big grinning Colvin, a sick duck, which led to her being insulted by boys on the street.* 3. *An orphan child, Grace Harper, a dark girl who lives under my care was lifted up by the neck, causing her to be ill for a week or so.* 4. *On one occasion he slapped her face.* 5. *He called her names — skinny, blockhead, donkey, yellow thing, darkie.* 6. *He gave her 2 or 3 handers at a time, causing her hands to be bruised and swollen for many days.*

These charges seemed to indicate that the Head was an absolute monster, revelling in inflicting mental as well as physical pain on poor innocents in his charge. An inquiry was set up by Inspector, Thomas Walker. When Alice House, a state child, also living with Miss Colvin, told the same story, things looked very black for Mr Godfrey. He denied the charges and was supported by ex-pupils who stated they had never witnessed anything like the alleged punishments nor had they heard any of the objectionable names allegedly used. Ex-pupils had to be called because the complaints were about incidents which were supposed to have occurred not two weeks earlier but two years prior. Why did not Miss Colvin complain then? A letter supporting the Head was signed by most parents:

- *We, the undersigned Parents and guardians of children attending the Public School hear with extreme regret the puerile accusations made by a limited number of persons reflecting on the character of the respected headmaster. J.H.S. Godfrey and we are unanimous in declaring that we are thoroughly satisfied in every particular with the manner Mr Godfrey administers his duties.*

The Inspector therefore had grave reasons to doubt the truthfulness of the accusers. Grace Harper, in particular, was well known in the school as an untruthful girl. He found that the charges were not proven, in fact, ridiculous and concluded that they were made to gratify spite and not just to have grievances addressed.

Other complainants were Mr Cunningham whose letter to the authorities was co-incidentally written on the same day as that of Miss Colvin. His concern was that Mr Godfrey had accused his daughter Ada of stealing. Indeed he had proof. At the subsequent inquiry he produced the proof — a letter from Mr Godfrey in which he apologised for having made a false accusation. The only problem was that the letter was in 16 pieces. It had been handed over to Constable Ross who unfortunately could not piece it together. Nor could any expert do so for it was obvious that many parts of the letter were missing. One piece of the puzzle showed the first two letters of the signatory Godfrey, but in no way did it resemble the Headmaster's handwriting. It was a clumsy forgery. Cunningham must have thought himself very clever in manufacturing this evidence, but it only condemned him. Furthermore, the girl Ada admitted before the inquiry that she had never been accused of stealing by Mr Godfrey. It appears that three Cunningham children had collected money by selling vegetables and instead of handing over the cash to their father, they had concocted this story. In the end Mr Cunningham had to eat humble pie, admitting that he had been grossly informed by his children.

A third person Mr Fetherstone had also written a complaint on the same day as the others about a matter which had occurred months before. A fourth complainant was a Mr Baker who followed up the charges exactly one week later. All charges which aimed to stain the name of the school's leader were not substantiated — nay — they proved to have been made as the result of a mischievous conspiracy which wasted the time of the school and the Department.

Fortunately, even before the inquiry, 71 parents and guardians representing 171 children attending the school spontaneously signed a petition presented to the Minister, a petition supporting their Headmaster against the puerile accusations made by a limited number of persons and testifying their complete satisfaction with the manner Mr Godfrey administered his duties. The list was headed by James Martin with three children in the school, Walter Lambert with six and C.Spies with three. There were other unsolicited testimonies sent in to the Minister, including the following from Mr Habez Horton:

- *I have the greatest number of children in the school and can say that I am, and always have been, thoroughly satisfied with Mr Godfrey's teaching and his methods. I cannot but look with pride at the excellent work that my elder children do, which I would be pleased to show anyone. The credit of this I must give to their head teacher.*
- *I regard Mr Godfrey as a born teacher, a strict disciplinarian (which is what is wanted), and a gentleman, and, if there were more teachers of his calibre, larrikinism would not be so rampant as it is to-day. I was educated in England and spent five years in America, and I think the system of education in N.S.W. so ably carried out by Mr Godfrey, to be far and a way the best of all, and I feel sure that if anything happened to deprive us of Mr Godfrey's services, it would be a calamity as far as my children are concerned. I might say I have had no conversation (directly or indirectly) with Mr Godfrey, nor does he know that I have written to you.*

What a wonderful testimonial to a teacher under assault of mischievous criticism from ignorant and spiteful people. Did Mr Godfrey then remain free of such trumped up charges? He did so for a couple of years until a vigorous attack on his integrity was launched.

#### GUILT BY ACCUSATION?

It was on March 18 1900 that a strong complaint from H.Bowers reached the Minister. It disparaged the conduct of Mr Godfrey and his manner of addressing the Bowers girls aged 13 and 15. *The charges were: 1. He has the habit of calling the elder one a cheat and dishonest and a dirty sneaking thing and the younger one humbug and he asked the elder one if she were deaf or a fool and that her room would be better without her company and to go home and wash pots. 2. He was constantly shouting out her age in the following manner: Girl Bowers 15 years six months— what will you do when you are 25. Only last week he said to the younger one: Are you a liar or are you not? 3. His general manner of addressing the class is sarcastic and abusive in the extreme. If they should ask him a question in respect to the lessons, instead of answering in a proper manner, he will tell them in an abrupt way to go down to a lower class and ask the Infants. I have frequently written to Mr Godfrey, but he seems to have taken not the slightest notice.*

Mr Bowers went on to state that he had kept the children at home, because they were simply terrified, that the teacher's threats had made one girl ill. Mr Bowers had made one earlier communication with Mr Godfrey: *Will you kindly allow Effie to sit in her proper place in class and not among the boys whose heads are smothered in vermin and coloured lads whose bodies are not of the sweet smelling at any time.* It seems that Bowers had been gathering all the ammunition he could find to fire a salvo at Godfrey.

An official inquiry was held on April 1 1900. Mr Bowers' two daughters gave their evidence, but two girl witnesses for the prosecution did not show up, which was rather damning for Mr Bowers case. Two teachers, Miss Donn and Mr Glynn, and two pupils, Violet Weil (daughter of Philip Weil, grocer and provision dealer) and Pearl Sterland, spoke in support of Mr Godfrey. The latter answered the charges in turn. The Inspector duly reported that the Bowers girls were in the bad habit of copying, but there was no evidence of their having been called cheats, nor Effie Bowers having been called dirty, mean and so on. Godfrey might have asked her if she was deaf, but there was no evidence that he called her a fool or saying that the room would be better without her company.

It was the Drill Inspector who reported that Effie was past fifteen years of age, but didn't know her left from her right and he had said: *I wonder if you will know when you are 27.* When challenged by the teacher about talking, Effie had denied it, whereupon the teacher was heard to ask: *Have you or have you not told a lie?* which was quite different from *You are a liar!* Effie had admitted that she had indeed told a lie. Inspector Lobban stated that Godfrey was calm and dignified in school, but very firm in seeing that his orders were obeyed. *He never relaxes or becomes unduly severe, but insists upon prompt obedience and demands a reasonable amount of work from the pupils. There is no evidence that Godfrey calls pupils dolts, blockheads etc nor that he said to the children that their parents were a lot of humbugs. There is no evidence of dissatisfaction on the part of any other parent. In fact, there is great respect and praise for him. The statements of the Bowers' children, if not absolutely true, are grossly exaggerated. The school is well conducted and Godfrey is a capable man and deserves to be protected from such persons as Mr Bowers.* Mr Bowers was informed that his charges had not been substantiated. While there might always be a little colouring of the facts by either party in such friction, it is sure that, if the Inspector had any doubt about the conduct of the teacher, he would have him, in the interests of the Department and the welfare of the children, most severely censured.

If Mr Godfrey had been well cleared of the above charges, it appears that in November 1901 he may have been guilty of some dirty work. Actually, while he was on long service leave there was an outbreak of scarlatina in the teacher's residence where Godfrey's family were living. One member was removed to Little Bay Hospital. The temporary Headmaster, Mr Chiplin, duly informed the Department: *It appears that the manure from the closet pans has for months been emptied by the contractor into the garden of the residence which is in the middle of the playground, where it has accumulated and is an objectionable state. I have sent for the contractor to remove the manure at once. One pupil has scarlet fever. Otherwise neither he nor his family would have countenanced such a thing.*

PLEASE DO NOT CONTAMINATE THE MORALS OF GLADESVILLE: EVILS OF GAMBLING SLATED  
On the last day of 1905 L.T.Folkard of Linsley Street, Gladesville, wrote to the Secretary of the Australian Protestant Defence Association: *I wish to bring to your notice an evil which seems to be creeping into bazaars etc. held in connection with some of our Public Schools and one I am sure it is the duty of our Council to nip in the bud. The evil to which I refer is gambling in the form of raffles — used in Ryde Council Chambers to raise money for Ryde Superior School.* The raffle consisted in people paying sixpence for a ticket, all of which were placed in a hat and a winner drawn therefrom. The Association duly complained to the Department of Public Instruction which simply responded by stating that raffles in school are not sanctioned and that any application for permission therefor was invariably refused. The association was still not satisfied and protested, but no further action was taken.

CURIOSITY: Have you ever thought about the abbreviation for the word number, as, for example, No 1? It is certainly not the shortening of the English word *number*, but of the Latin *numero* which means by number. Correctly, as an abbreviation which includes the last letter, it is written as *No* (not *No.*) which makes it the same form as the negative *no*. Confused? Well, that's English, which is not always *numero uno* in logic.

#### DISOBEDIENCE ENCOURAGED BY PARENT

On June 30 1908 a complaint to the Chief Inspector was made by Mrs F.Garnett of Morrison Road against Miss Lewis and Mr Berry for the ill treatment of her child of eight. She alleged that Miss Lewis had caned her daughter because she had mistakes in dictation and that the same teacher had thrown a book at her elder daughter. *I spoke to Headmaster Berry who said he would investigate the matter and that there would be no further cause to complain, but a few days later Lewis punched my child in the back and called her a liar. I again went to complain, but only got insulted. The next day Lewis would not allow them to sit in their own places but with the boys and told the class not to speak to them or associate with a liar. One day Mr Berry called one of my children a thief. When I asked him about it, he called me a liar. Later he accused my child of stealing something. Although it was found under a boy's foot, no apology was made to her. I am keeping my children at home until the matter is investigated.*

Predicably enough, when teachers were asked for an explanation, quite a different story unfolded. Nevertheless an official inquiry ensued. Miss Lewis was found blameless. The child had been given one stroke by the Head, not for mistakes in dictation, but for disobedience. It was policy for teachers to send any disobedient child to the Head. A few days later Miss Lewis sent the child to the Head for cheating, but it appears that the child did not obey. She hid in the hat-room until play hour when she met her sister. The latter ran home evidently conveying an exaggerated story with the result that the mother visited the school forthwith and abused Miss Lewis in language unbecoming. Mrs Garnett would not listen, nor would she accept any explanation. To quote Mr Berry: *I asked her to come into the schoolroom and assured her whatever complaint she had would be fully inquired into. This she refused, stating that she believed her own daughter in preference to anyone. She further stated that she was not finding fault with me but wanted to talk to Miss Lewis.*

*I refused to allow her to continue abusing Miss Lewis and she then accused me of shielding the teachers. The statement regarding myself and the accusation of theft is completely untrue. About twelve months ago a threepence was lost in the Infants room. The teacher, having made a full inquiry and failing to solve the difficulty, sent for me. I asked several children had they seen the coin. Among those questioned were Mrs Garnett's children. The same day Mrs Garnett came and asked why her children had been accused of stealing. I told her that she had been wrongly informed and then fully explained the matter to her, evidently to her satisfaction. No words of the kind mentioned were used by me. The children are at times hard to manage for the reason that the mother confesses she instructs them not to obey the rules of the school.*

From all the evidence Inspector Flashman concluded that Mrs Garnett was a most unreasonable and impulsive person. Mrs Garnet, on being informed that her claims had not be substantiated, responded in writing with the following: *You infer that I am a liar. What I complained about is correct and I am the best judge of whether the caning was severe or not. You did not see the child's hand. If Miss Lewis does not treat her well, I will go to the Minister.* The Department only noted her reply and nothing further was heard of the matter. In passing it can be noted that some children, anxious to impress their parents with their complaints, have been known to create nice red marks on their hands or arms by arresting the flow of blood on surface veins for a short while.

#### TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

When the telephone arrived in the Headmaster's office, one smart lad, bent on wagging school one day, decided to spend two pence at the public phone and speak with the teacher: *I'm ringing up to say that Jimmie Smith will be absent to-day. He is sick. Oh yes, said the Head, and may I ask who is speaking ?* The boy promptly replied: *This is me father.*

#### CARPING CRITIC'S CONSTANT COMPLAINTS

It was on February 12 1910 that a Mr J.Pattinson contacted the Minister with a strong complaint about his sons' having been caned for a few mistakes in dictation or sums. He alleged that four or six cuts were given even on the body. He wrote: *I understand that teachers get their salary for teaching not caning for ignorance. My boys tell me they feel quite sick when they see so many children getting caned. Teachers have this week broken two canes over the children. My eldest boy nearly got hit in the eye with a bit of the cane when it broke.* [Boys have been known, during the teacher's absence, to split the ends of the rattan cane by means of a razor-blade, so that the next time or two the cane is used it splits entirely in two.] *My boys are not learning anything at all. They made great progress at their last school, Epping. They asked me to-day if they could possibly go to some other school. My little girl told me that a few days ago her teacher caned a little boy all over the body. She said the child was trembling from head to foot. The same child got another beating to-day. The teacher said she was just in the humour for caning the whole lot of them, and she is always nagging at them. My children have never witnessed such cruelty before and they are quite shocked. Will you kindly put a stop to it?*

An inspectorial inquiry began. The teacher targeted for such monstrous cruelty to the young children was again Miss Gertrude Lewis. In her defence she stated having had no recollection of having said she threatened to cane the whole class, and, if she had said anything like this, she would certainly have had no intention of carrying it out. Another teacher, Alex McPhee, asserted that he never punished a child for failure or inability to learn or for neglect to prepare home lessons. I have never used the cane as a teaching aid. Grave doubts were cast on his affirmation after the Inspector had interviewed no less than ten pupils, each separately. Most stated that they had indeed been punished for mistakes for not doing arithmetic correctly or having mistakes in spelling.

#### GLADESVILLE'S CLIMATE GOES HOT AND COLD

In the early days it was daily practice in the school to record the temperature and barometer readings. One day in 1912 in high summer the mercury rose to a maximum of 108.2 ° Fahrenheit [42.3° Centigrade]. Just four days earlier the level fell to a minimum 43° F. [6.1° C.]. The variation in temperature was a massive 65° Fahrenheit or 36.2° Centigrade.

Inspector Flashman then arranged to meet Mr Pattinson at school, but the complainant did not turn up. In his report: *I inquired of his child at school and found out that Mr Pattinson was at home. I sent his son to request him to come and meet me. He declined, so I conducted the inquiry without him. It revealed that at the time of the Pattinson complaint his children had only been at Gladesville School for eleven days, that the three children were exceedingly backward, that they had attended a large number of schools, that they were in bad habits, that they were unpunctual, usually arriving at 11 a.m. and sometimes returning from lunch at 2:45 or 3 p.m. Although they brought their lunch to school, they frequently left the playground at lunchtime without permission and had not returned in the afternoon. All teachers had complained about the irregular conduct of these children.* The Inspector found that none of the pupils had suffered corporal punishment. There was no cane in the school, just a small dry twig which was the only instrument used in token of a cane.

The Headmaster, Mr Berry, was a very strong advocate in opposition to corporal punishment [no doubt after the last inquiry mentioned in the previous Tale]. Senior lads in his class confirmed that no corporal punishment had been given for a year or more. Incidentally, Mr Berry was so highly respected by the Parents and Citizens that, with his transfer from Gladesville to Cremorne in 1917 after eleven years in the job, he was presented with a gold watch. Special permission was also sought and granted by the Department for a framed portrait of the esteemed Headmaster to be hung within the school.

**CURIOSITY:** Dull pupils used to be referred to as dunces. Strange to tell, the word dunce derives from the name of the great Scottish intellectual, Duns Scotus

The Inspector found that Mr McPhee was guilty of punishing children in consequence of failure at lessons, that such punishment was not severe. Nevertheless he warned the teacher to adhere strictly to regulations in future. No doubt McPhee used the cane a lot more than the Inspector knew. In the case of Miss Lewis McPhee stated: *I believe Miss Lewis did say something to the effect of "Do your best or I shall be inclined to cane you all", but that this was said in a jocular manner, which, in a child's mind, might seem alarming and consequently, when reported at home, could cause parents great concern. My impression is that the whole trouble has arisen from this unfortunate remark, but that the charge of excess corporal punishment is unproven.* Nevertheless the Inspector found Miss Lewis guilty of using injudicious language to the children. She was advised against using extravagant expressions which might be misinterpreted. Mr Pattinson, who had made similar complaints at the several other schools his children had attended, was informed accordingly.

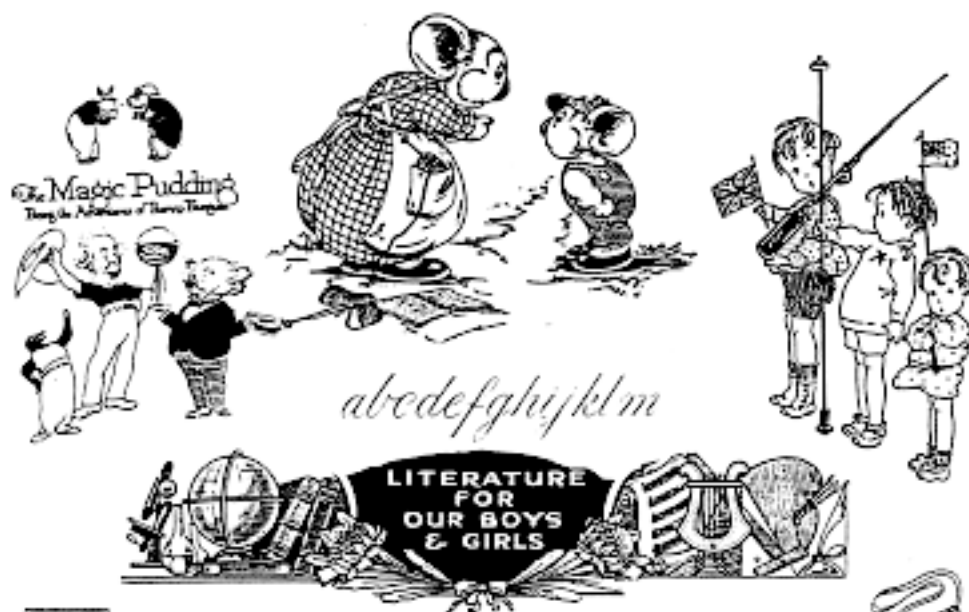


TEST FOR ADULT READERS: A. Question: Is there one word in the English language that contains all the vowels? Answer: Unquestionably! B. Question: What is the word that has only three syllables, yet contains 26 letters? Answer: Alphabet. C. Question: What is the difference between *here* and *there*? Answer: The letter *t*. D. Question: Which word begins and ends with *he*? Answer: Headache.

#### CELEBRATIONS IN 1919 AND 1926

After the terrible Great War finished in 1918, official peace celebrations had to wait until the following year to allow ex-servicemen time to return from the fronts. Every community and school became involved in the celebrations. Gladesville School's planned participation with a ceremony followed by a picnic in the grounds of the Gladesville Hospital had to be postponed because of the Spanish Influenza epidemic. All pupils (including ex-pupils and children not yet enrolled) who were under 16 on Armistice day 1918 were presented with a Peace Medal. Another big day celebrated by the community and all the schools of the district was Festival Day, August 27 1926 during Back To Ryde Week (22-29 August). All schools in the Municipality were closed to allow pupils to participate in the various activities. There were lectures in the Town Hall on Old Ryde delivered by members of the Historical Society and by other persons well versed in the subject. There were sports and picnics in Ryde Park. The Mayor and Councillors as well as a large number of citizens celebrated this auspicious occasion.

# MEMORIES OF SCHOOLDAYS LONG AGO



## JACK OF THE INKPOT.

I dance on your paper, I hide in your pen,  
I make in your inkstand my little black den ;  
And when you're not looking, I hop on your nose,  
And leave on your forehead  
the marks of my toes.

When you're trying to finish  
your "i" with a dot,  
I slip down your finger and  
make it a blot ;  
And when you're so busy to  
cross a big "T,"  
I make on the paper a little  
Black Sea.

I drink blotting paper, eat pen-wiper pie ;  
You never can catch me, you never need try !  
I leap any distance, I use any ink,  
I'm on to your fingers before you can wink.

s : m : f | s : d : r | m : r | d : d : m | s : s | f : m : r | d : f | r : - : s,  
1. Land of our birth, we pledge to thee our love and toil in the years to be: When

JUST BEFORE WE LEAVE THIS TOPIC: PERPETUAL PROBLEM FOR PUPILS:

Parent: *How do you like your teacher, dear?*

Child: *Oh, I suppose she is all right, but, boy, is she bigoted!*

Parent: *Bigoted, in what way?*

Child: *She's got the idea that words can only be spelled her way.*

DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE INSPECTOR AND THE SCHOOLTEACHER

*What are the three most common words in your class?*

*I don't know. How right you are!*

## IT'S FUN O'CLOCK AT SCHOOL

Teacher: *Who can tell me what you know about the poet, John Milton?* Thoughtful pupil: *As I recall, Sir, it was some time after he was married that he was inspired to write the epic poem called "Paradise Lost". After he lost his wife, he wrote "Paradise Regained".*

Figures don't lie, unless you make them:

2004

#### THE MEMORABLE MISS MORGAN

Miss Clara Morgan was a teacher who spent most of her teaching career at Gladesville School. She became a legend in her own time. She entered the service in 1890 as a pupil-teacher and devoted decades of her life to giving the most thorough education possible to those in her control. While teaching at Gladesville she lived mostly at a residence called *Greyclyffe* at Huntley's Point. Many a parent complained about her excessive zeal and there were isolated instances where she was involved in some official inquiry where she never capitulated. The details of a couple of battles follow.

#### MISSILES MARKED FOR MISS MORGAN MARTINET MISTRESS

On August 2 1926 Mrs H.Sexton of *Hollywood*, Albert Street, Gladesville, wrote to the Department complaining that her daughter Edith had, for some months, not been arriving home until after 5 p.m., despite the fact that she lived barely 15 minutes walk from the school. The parent wrote this: *It appears that she has been continually kept at school until 5 p.m. by Infants Mistress Miss Morgan and on top of that is given homework to do. The child is only seven years and three months. I respectfully ask you to deal with Miss Morgan and stop this practice. Meanwhile, I am keeping my child at home to give her a rest and await instructions from you concerning future attendance. I have already asked Miss Morgan to discontinue this practice, but she takes no notice. That is why I appeal to you. My children are very regular in their attendance, particularly Edith, and I am very anxious that they should receive all the education they possibly can and for as long as possible, but I am anxious for their safety on the way home. Three of them go together in the morning, but only two come back together. The missing one is always Edith. I can readily understand Edith or any of them being kept in now and again, but with Edith it is every day the same.*

Before the Department could contact Miss Morgan about this complaint, the Infants Mistress had already sent a letter dated August 4 to Mr Sexton informing him that Edith had been absent for the past two days and added: *I presume you are carrying out your threat and in the meantime your girl is losing valuable time. I wish to inform you that Edith is no longer a pupil of Upper Second Class [Miss Morgan's]. Whenever she returns she takes her place in a lower class. Hence there will be no necessity for the slightest detention for the purpose of giving her extra time and attention.* Miss Morgan then added rather caustically: *An absence other than for illness is not permitted. It would be well for you to see that your daughter attends without delay. Otherwise her absence must be reported.*

Obviously the tone of this letter would not have exactly pleased the parents. To be sure, the father, Mr Sexton, set about contacting the Department again and enclosing Miss Morgan's undiplomatic, nay, imperious letter. *You will see that Miss Morgan does not deny having kept the child after hours. Also she shows her vindictiveness by putting the child back to a lower class. As I informed you, I did keep the child home for two days, because it was either that or the doctor. Of the two evils I chose the lesser. It seems hard that the child is victimised in this way.*

#### AN INNOCENT FAUX PAS

In former days the title of the head of a school was either Headmaster or Headmistress. In recent decades the term was changed to Principal. Times change and language usage with it. However, some of us seniors still use the words we used nearly all our life. So, one day I went into Gladesville School and asked: *Am I speaking to the Headmistress?* The response was simply this: *I am the Principal and, believe me, I am nobody's mistress!*

*Three weeks ago I wrote to Miss Morgan to desist, but she took no notice. I said: About Edie coming home late — at first I took no notice, thinking that she had loitered on the way home. I told her sister Kathleen to wait for her for several days and it was still 5 o'clock when they reached home. Now this has got to cease and at once or I shall be forced to get into communication with the Department via the Minister with a view to putting a stop to it. There has been far too much pin-pricking tactics with my child. Some of you people think you can get the best out of pupils by doing as you do. Leading, not driving, gets the best out of pupils. Please put an end to this business and avoid trouble, which I shall surely make, if it isn't settled. On August 2 I wrote again in polite terms, but I said, "as for my wife coming to see you, she has neither the time nor the inclination; moreover she has better sense."*

Some vengeful infants, far from the gaze and ears of the mighty Miss Morgan, enjoyed this chant: *Old Ma Morgan used to pound the organ on a Sunday mornin'*.

Was Miss Morgan fearful of being reported to the Department? Not so, she remained adamant in her attitude, indeed recalcitrant. On August 9 she wrote her response to the Department's request for an explanation: *Edie has been in my class barely four weeks. She has very fair ability, but former teachers complained about her boldness and wilfulness. Thinking that more work would afford less time for mischief, I promoted her.* [One could read into the promotion that Miss Morgan decided to take her in hand herself with the idea "I'll fix her!"]. *She was very much behind the class work, hence she was detained occasionally. Regarding her home lessons, she was given work taking only ten minutes each day. On one occasion only did she bring the homework in. As far as I could judge, the child was encouraged at home to defy the teacher's authority. Of the 18 days she has been in my class I cannot state the number of detentions after school hours. Her usual time of leaving was 4 p.m. She was once kept in until 4:20. If she does not get home till 5:15, it is a case of loitering, trading on the fact of being kept in. I asked to see her mother but she refused. The 2B teacher dismisses her class at 3:30.*

One could think that each party made the best case they could, each perhaps distorting some of the facts somewhat. It was up to the Inspector to hold an inquiry, which soon took place. The Inspector duly reported: *I am convinced that Miss Morgan has acted by the best motives, that she is a hard-working teacher, but her endeavouring to push the child by detaining her was an unwise one and out of order, particularly in the Infants School. Furthermore, the giving of homework to Infant pupils is contrary to the general Instructions to Teachers.* Accordingly Miss Morgan was informed that, while the Department fully recognised her conscientiousness and unselfish work, the practice of keeping Infants in after school was inadvisable and giving them homework was contrary to regulations. Mr Sexton was informed that it was the Department's opinion that Miss Morgan had acted as she thought was in the best interests of the child, that placing Edie in a lower class was not out of vindictiveness but in order to place her more in accordance with her age and her standard of attainment. Mr Sexton did not receive this information with good grace. He replied immediately stating the Department's letter was unsatisfactory and far from being intelligent. There was no further action. Did Miss Morgan then stick scrupulously to the regulations to which her attention had been officially drawn? We shall see.

#### SOME PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

Nothing is impossible — if you don't have to do it yourself. Silence in class is the best substitute for brains ever invented. It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt. A pupil's brain is a wonderful organ: it starts the moment it wakes in the morning and continues until it goes into school.

#### MISTRESS IN SOME DISTRESS

On October 18 1928 Mr F.J.Tearle of 6 Eltham Street wrote to the Minister about unsatisfactory treatment of his child Marjorie under the care of Miss Morgan: *I am surprised to learn that children in the Infants are asked to find certain passages in the Bible, as, in my opinion, their brain is not sufficiently matured for such a test. They are hardly old enough to know about the Bible, but the exception I take is that my child gave the answer right and was contradicted by the teacher. The question was: "Who was the man who climbed a tree to see Jesus and what was the name of the tree?" When the child wrote Zacchaeus and sycomore (St Luke 1-2-4), the child was told that there was not an "a" before "-eus", that there was such a thing as a diphthong "ae", but those children are not old enough to understand, and that "sycomore" should be spelt "sycamore". My child said that that was what was written in the family Bible [undoubtedly the child had had help from her parents].*

*The teacher contradicted her [and in the process the parents who did the research for the child] and took off two marks from the drawing she had made of Zacchaeus on the tree. I also object to the teacher keeping the class back 30 to 45 minutes after school. One child in her class has a 2-mile walk and in lonely bush. On Wednesday I fetched my child from school at 3:55 and there was no sign of dispersing. I am keeping my child at home until she is removed from Miss Morgan's class.*

ALPHABETICAL LOVE MESSAGE AT GLADESVILLE SCHOOL 1939

O MLE what XTC I always feel when UIC.  
I used to rave at LN's eyes; 4LC I gave countless sighs.  
4 KT 2 and LN-or I was a keen competitor,  
But each now's a non-NTT. 4UXL them all, UC.

Perhaps Miss Morgan felt a little pressure in being asked to respond to the charges made. In fact, she wrote some seven pages of explanation — not in any sense of defeat but in strong defence of herself and her high standards. Among other things she stated: *The Tearle girl is very keen. She lost two marks because she was not altogether honest. She considered her work correct, but I pointed out that she had wrongly written capital letters for “the” [how pedantic!] and “sycamore”, and that “sycamore” was spelt with an “a” and not an “o”. The child said it was written with an “o” in her Bible, I have since found both spellings, but I said “Bring your Bible and we shall see if you are correct”. She did not attend after that day. I wish it to be understood that I am most precise in the correction of work [an understatement, to be sure!]. I pass over not the slightest error. Bible reading is not homework, it is optional. [If that were so, those who opted out of it would not be truly involved in the subsequent time it took in class for Miss Morgan to check out the answers of those who chose to do the home work.] My pupils are trained to correct their own work and the passing over of the slightest error is considered as an act of dishonesty. [Goodness, the children might have been put to the rack for forgetting to dot their “i”s and cross their “t”s. It is well-known that trained teachers often fail to pick up errors when marking work. Are the oversights of adults to be construed as acts of dishonesty like those of little infants?].*

*I feel that the child has suffered no injustice at my hands. I have no apology to offer, but I do regret not having been aware of the obsolete spelling of sycomore. As to the statements of non-dismissal [she carefully avoided referring to the children being kept in] other duties as Mistress often delay my return to class. On the day in question Miss Sharp had 2A for Art and the lesson may have run five or ten minutes late. 3:55 p.m on October 17 is untrue. 30 to 45 minutes detention is absolutely false. All in all, this was a storm in a teacup, but one where each party became upset. The Department informed Mr Tearle that Miss Morgan was an excellent teacher with high standards, that it regrettable that he did not communicate directly with the teacher, but that the teacher would be advised not to keep infants in after school. Undoubtedly, the parent considered Miss Morgan difficult to approach. Miss Morgan was mildly censured and warned again to detain infants after school only under exceptional circumstances. The girl remained in Miss Morgan's class for the remainder of the year.*

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
| 16 | 3  | 2  | 13 |
| 5  | 10 | 11 | 8  |
| 9  | 6  | 7  | 12 |
| 4  | 15 | 14 | 1  |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | 9 | 2 |
| 3 | 5 | 7 |
| 8 | 1 | 6 |

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
| 6  | 13 | 12 | 3  |
| 7  | 9  | 16 | 2  |
| 10 | 4  | 5  | 15 |
| 11 | 8  | 1  | 14 |

**Magic Squares:** Add up the numbers in each of the above squares by rows, by columns or by diagonals. The result will always be the same for each box, 34, 15 and 34 respectively.

#### REMINISCENCES ABOUT THE MIGHTY MISTRESS MORGAN THE MARTINET

A stern but fair disciplinarian who commanded pupils' attention like no other, a dedicated teacher with the zeal of a missionary, an exacting disciplinarian, a deeply religious, punctilious person, a legend in her own time — these are some of the descriptions of Miss Clara Morgan, for many years Mistress of the Infants Department at Gladesville Public School. Whether her pupils loved her or were petrified by her presence, the overwhelming majority had respect for her as the one who taught them more than any other teacher in their school career. Undoubtedly teaching was her life.

Lisa Veness (nee Walker born 1915) recalls her time at school with Miss Morgan. Lisa was a foster child dressed in poor clothes at whom children poked fun: *My life at home was very hard. I was told, for example, that I must not play hopscotch at school or do skipping, as it would wear out my shoes. At school I found Miss Morgan terribly tough and frightening, but treated us all fairly. We had to sit up straight with our hands behind our back, so we couldn't fidget, and keep our eyes only on her every minute. Otherwise we would be in trouble. One child, I remember, suffered from St Vitas' Dance, allegedly on account of her feeling so threatened by the teacher. She was transferred to another class. I never learned so much as I did in Miss Morgan's class. I was only average, but to-day I can spell well — that I owe to her. She made arithmetic so clear, that we could understand it. If not, she would keep us in after school, but I would then get into trouble from my foster-parents for being home late. Anyone who did not obey Miss Morgan's edicts, would be given hell — by words and looks or punishment with the cane. I never got the cane. Parents complained about her, but she always got good results.*

*Unlike the entertainment kids have at school to-day through excursions, television and video, we had little relief from the everyday humdrum of class and the repressive discipline of the mighty Miss Morgan. One thing I do remember that was fun was the Punch and Judy Show that toured the various schools. Punch and Judy were presented by glove puppets in a small booth with an opening at the top. At the time we were never quite sure how it all happened, but it did. The Punch and Judy show goes back to 1727 when a puppet showman named John Harris featured a funny puppet called Punchinello. This short, stout, hook-nosed character of comical appearance was originally an Italian marionette or string puppet. Judy was his wife. Other characters in the drama presented were a hangman, a baby, a devil and a crocodile.*



#### SOME BOUQUETS FOR MISS MORGAN

Charles Murray (born 1915) recalls two acts of great kindness rendered him by the infamous Miss Morgan: *First, I have to say that quite a few kiddies at school, including my brother Frank (born 1918), were so frightened of Miss Morgan that they often ran away from school. Just the same, I found that there was another side to the fear-inspiring Mistress of the Infants School. It was during the Great Economic Depression. One day I found myself outside Gladesville School when Miss Morgan came onto the footpath from the school carrying a heavy port. It was the end of term and she was obviously going away that day for the holidays straight from school. I offered to carry her bag to the terminus where she intended catching a tram. When I was about to leave, she insisted on paying me two shillings for this small service. She knew that I was out of work and two shillings then was an overpayment. That amount equates mathematically to to-day's 20 cents, but then it was very much more appreciated. On another occasion she saw me on the street and asked me if I could borrow a scythe to cut the grass in one section of the playground. It took me all the afternoon and she rewarded me with five shillings (50 cents), a princely sum in those days for an unemployed youth. I feel sure that she paid this out of her own pocket and equally sure that she performed similar acts of kindness to ex-pupils out of work.*



The tram terminus that used to be at the corner of Victoria Road and Jordan Street along with waiting room, a small office for the Starter and Timekeeper and behind a toilet for tramway staff. There was also a water bubbler for the public. All have since vanished. — Photo taken in 1928 and supplied by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

Len Birch (born 1927) tells a similar story about his time with the famous Mistress in 1935: *She was an imposing bespectacled figure with long hair tied up at the back in a bun. She was always in full command, since our eyes never left her. My Mum was at school one day and later remarked how subservient I was before Miss Morgan, bowing my head slightly with a compliant "Yes Miss Morgan, Yes Miss Morgan." I can still hear her eccentric expressions like "Come hither!" and "Go yonder!" It was a part of her mystique. Then there was her awe-inspiring action of hauling a pupil from the desk with her hand under the pupil's chin. Every morning we recited our arithmetical tables, so that they remain to-day embedded in the brain. There is no doubt that teaching was her whole life and I still have the greatest respect for her. I retain the little card she presented to me before I was promoted to Third Class. On one side it read: "In Remembrance of Infant and School Days. To Love God and To never be Afraid. To Bear Ever Truths on My Lips, Cleanness in My Heart." On the other side it was signed C.S.Morgan 1/36.*

#### ONE TEACHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Miss Clara Morgan seems to have based her philosophy on the words of Dr John Flynn, the creator of the unique Flying Doctor Service for isolated people in Australia's outback:

*"Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers;  
Pray for powers equal to your tasks."*

Valerie McAndrew (nee Moss born 1932) remembers the unforgettable character only too well: *It seems she selected all the pupils for her 2A class. At least we were all interviewed by her before we were admitted to her class. I was scared stiff of her. We learned things in her class that were normally taught in the Primary Department, things like twelve times tables, the colours of the rainbow and difficult spelling words. Most practically she would demonstrate the rainbow with her own triangular prism outside in the sunlight.*

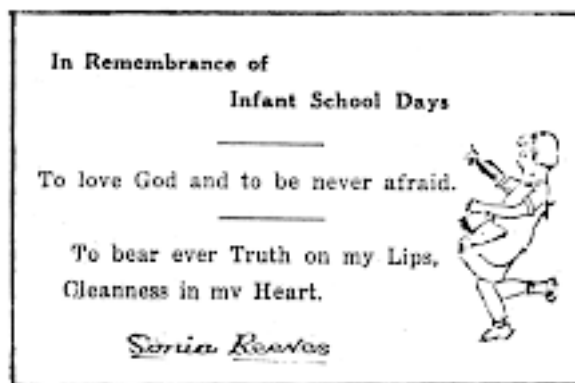
My "graduation card" I received from her bears a little religious-like message: "Cleanliness is next to Godliness". They say that a little bit of fear, like driving on the wrong side of the road, is the beginning of discipline. Well, whether it was from fear of Miss Morgan or respect for her, we all learned our lessons very well. It was a good grounding for Primary School. Pupils in other classes had a much easier time, but they learned far, far less than we did. Once my Mum went up to see Miss Morgan on a friendly matter. She went back home with the resolve that that would be the last time. She too felt overawed by the mighty Mistress Morgan. Mum had felt like one of the pupils.

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION: FROM KNOWLEDGE TO WISDOM

The main aim of education is to provide individuals with the ability to think for themselves.— Harry Allen, former highly respected teacher in New South Wales. If only this aim were fulfilled in the majority of cases, we would have a better society.

Sonia Hickson (nee Reeves born 1934) has a further word on Miss Morgan. Incidentally, Sonia enjoys the distinction of being chosen as the winner of the Baby Show at the celebration of the Centenary of Gladesville in 1935 and recalls with pride that it was her great-grandfather Reeves who built the stone walls of the Gladesville Hospital as well as some stone cottages in Bateman's Road (now heritage houses).

My brother Geoff (born 1935) and I were in Miss Morgan's class, though in different years. He found her terrifying, whereas I got on well with her. Of course, she was a taskmaster, but I have only fond memories of her. She was fair and I was never in trouble. Aside from her thoughtful card of graduation from the Infants, I cherish a personal letter from her. When she was in Secombe Hospital Drummoyne in February 1941, I wrote a Get Well note to her, something she appreciated so much.



I feel I owe everything to Miss Morgan for building a solid foundation for my subsequent primary and secondary education. At the Centenary celebration of Gladesville School Miss Morgan's famous chair was on display. It was a high chair with a platform step up to a seat some three feet from the floor. Chosen pupils sat here at Miss Morgan's behest. Sometimes it was a throne of honour to pay tribute to a pupil's high achievement; sometimes it was a place of disgrace for an intransigent pupil. It was a Miss Morgan innovation probably unparalleled in the annals of teaching.

A contemporary of Miss Morgan, Bill Mahon, who regularly taught Third Class, is reported to have said: *The kiddies coming from Miss Morgan's Second Class to Third Class practically went crazy, experiencing a sense of great release from the pressure she had exerted upon them. But there was no doubt she had done her work well. I had nothing to teach. She had taken the pupils well beyond Second Class work. They had done long multiplication and long division and knew all their tables up to twelve times. She was the hardest woman the Department of Education ever produced. You couldn't tell Miss Morgan anything.*

If, to-morrow, class sizes go over thirty pupils, there would be a hue and cry from both teachers and parents alike, yet Miss Morgan, who taught her flock so well, was happy with, if not insistent on, teaching 60, 70 or even 80 kiddies in the one group. Old class photos show at least 30 girls and 30 boys taken separately. Such a devoted teacher and disciplinarian, who could successfully defy the powers above her if she believed she was right, may never pass this way again. To be sure, ex-pupils, hold regular reunions under the banner of Miss Morgan's Class of such and such a year. Miss Morgan retired in 1941 and died in 1947, at the age of 71.



In 1999, after sixty years, pupils of Miss Morgan's 2A Class, all well self-disciplined and proud, were delighted to return to the school campus and do honour to her memory. — Photo 1999 by author.

#### DAYS OF DEEP DEPRESSION

In the early 1930s when the Great Economic Depression was biting deeply into the lives of the unemployed, the Gladesville Parents & Citizens ran regular dances twice a week at the school in order to raise money for needy children. Each day they took 14 loaves of bread and made sandwiches for 90 children, also four gallons of milk. Four women and two men applied themselves to the task each day between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The P & C still provided money for Prize-giving Day at the end of each year held either at Gus Bowe's Victory Theatre on Victoria Road by Osgathorpe Avenue or at the Palace Theatre de Luxe in Jordan Street. Times of need are generally accompanied by an increase in crime. In June 1930 a Penny Concert was held at the school in order to provide funds to replace typewriters which had been stolen. Later the school piano and framed pictures were also stolen. Sample prices in the 1930s: Bowen's Men's Wear Store advertised Akubra hats at 25/-, Men's pullovers at 11/3, Men's Pyjamas from 5/11 to 12/6, while C.W.Weil near the school was selling paint at 24/- per gallon.

#### THE LITTLE CURIOSITY SHOP — A LITTLE GENEROSITY SHOP TO BOOT

A shop close to Weil's is still in the hearts of hundreds of children, now old-timers, as that of a very dear kind lady, Miss Alice Chard. For many years she ran a craft and mixed business shop. She also had a small lending library in the days before the Council provided one. Hers was not exactly the school shop but it was the shop almost next to the school eagerly frequented by children. During the dim days of the Great Economic Depression Miss Chard provided free lunches and tit-bits for many an undernourished child. Hers was a bit of a curiosity shop with stamps and odds and ends which kids loved to look at, even if they could not buy. All sorts of sweets including home-made toffees were an attraction. Among the so called *lucky toffees* there were some with a halfpenny or penny coin in the base. During the Pacific War (1941-1945) and in the immediate post-war era when lots of items of stationery were scarce, you might have found what you were looking for at Miss Chard's.

Parent: *Is my boy really trying at school?* Teacher: *Yes, I can assure you, very trying!*

#### ONE DAY IN NOVEMBER THE LOCAL MEMBER WOULD REMEMBER

It was late November 1932 when an irate parent spoke directly with the local Member of Parliament, E.S.Spooner, concerning a false accusation of theft made by a teacher at Gladesville against her beloved son. Mrs Marion Thompson of 451 Victoria Road had told the following: *Mr McCrae accused my son of stealing a water pistol. He inferred that the other boys in the class could punch up the guilty party when found out. He caned the boy until he was ill. He described my son as a red-eyed Mongoloid and his Scottish accent as Woolloomooloo slang. The boy's father is in the Royal Marines in England.* Mrs Thompson also made serious allegations about the teacher's filthy appearance and of his wife's drunkenness. While mature people will normally wait to hear both sides of any argument, Mr Spooner seemed to be extremely sympathetic to the case put forward by one of his constituents. His impression of the lad's innocence was strong when he asked for the matter to be investigated officially. The matter dragged on, because the Department insisted that the complainant put her accusations in writing. When she finally did so, the M.P. forwarded this with his second letter and asked for swift action. By this time it was in the middle of the long vacation.

#### LOST IN THOUGHT

The pupil did not seem to be paying heed to the teacher's question. The teacher tapped the pupil on the shoulder and said: *Excuse me. You seem lost in thought.* The pupil replied forthwith: *Yes, Miss, it's because I'm in unfamiliar territory.*

Finally on Wednesday February 1 1933 Inspector Lee arranged a meeting between Mrs Thompson and Mr McCrae, but because the lad in question was not present, the inquiry was put off one week to February 8. On that day the inquiry was terminated by Mrs Thompson's abruptly leaving and slamming the door. She had heard things she did not want to hear. The Inspector referred to the 1931 Inspection Report on the 50-year-old Mr McCrae recognising him as an indefatigable worker, thoroughly reliable and conscientious with good order in the class and to the 1932 report as a hard worker, earnest and enthusiastic and deeply interested in the welfare of his pupils.

Mr McCrae explained how he had confiscated water pistols from three boys in the playground and placed them in his drawer. They were to be returned on Friday afternoon, but when the time came to do so, one was missing. Three pupils witnessed Thompson putting his handkerchief on one in the drawer and secreting the pistol in his pocket. One had seen him empty the water from the pistol through the open window. The teacher stated: *I did not accuse Thompson. I addressed the whole class, asking the guilty one to return the pistol by the following Wednesday. On that day Mrs Thompson and her son presented themselves at the classroom and took up a very insolent and insulting attitude. Mrs Thompson would not listen to any reason or explanation. I was constrained to call Mr Austin, the Acting Headmaster. He met with similar discourtesy. She threatened to report the matter and he had to ask her to leave the premises as her loud altercations could be heard all over the building. Before departing, she forcibly entered my classroom, pushed me aside and announced to the whole class that I was an unfit person to teach children. She ordered her boy to pack up his material and leave the room. I remonstrated, but the boy ran from the room and has not attended since that date. When Mr Henry was Headmaster here, he had recourse to draw attention to Thompson's poor attendance. She called and insulted him, saying he was no better than his class teacher.*

It could easily be concluded that Mrs Thompson ex Great Britain considered people she could not handle as mere Colonials. Mr McCrae offered his own opinion at the inquiry: *I really think Mrs Thompson's complaint is for the purpose of her own culpability re her boy's non-attendance and her own behaviour when she visited the school.* The teacher then asked the Inspector: *I would be grateful if you could protect me in the future from this woman's interference and insults.* All Mr McCrae's statements were verified by colleagues, Messrs Austin, Mahon and Wrenford. Mr Austin indicated that Mrs Thompson was so offensive he was about to call in the Police to eject her.

Pupils Don Osborne, Fred Ferns and Fred Stammer gave evidence against Thompson and maintained that the teacher did not openly accuse him. That was the stage when the irate parent could stand no more. Without wanting to admit to herself that her son had cooked up his own story, she stormed out. The conclusion of the inquiry was obvious, namely that there was no foundation to the complaints made. Mrs Thompson had not only caused a lot of trouble and wasted much time, she had also seriously embarrassed the Local Member. He had backed the wrong horse. That day in November when Mrs Thompson came to him with her tale of woe was one he would remember and eat humble pie. The upshot of the dismal story was that young Thompson left the school and attended Boronia School. In March 1935, however, he returned to Gladesville where there were some misgivings about re-enrolling him. After due consultation with authorities the head re-admitted him and nothing further was heard or seen of his tempestuous mother.

**RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING**

*Let's Revolt against Miss Morgan* by Hugo First  
*The Infamous Caning at Gladesville School* by Irish teacher, Paddy Whack  
*Fall from the Verandah* by Eileen Dover  
*A Plot to Blow up the School* by Dina Mite  
*Traffic on Great North Road in the 19th Century* by Orson Carriage

**RECALLING PLEASURES OF THE PAST: THE JOY OF THE SCHOOL EXCURSION**

However happy one's schooldays, getting out of school on a school journey was generally a grand plus. Elaine Wilson (nee Pilmer born 1925) recalls: *It was the greatest thrill of our lives piling onto a tram for a school excursion, especially the day we were privileged to go into town to see the film version of Charles Dickens' novel "David Copperfield"*.



A scene in the school hall on Open Day September 8 2004. Nostalgia was in the air when ex-pupils returned to their former place of learning to relish the viewing of class photos, enrolment registers and general school history as well as reunion with contemporaries. — Photo by author.

**CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE:** Father to son in Kindergarten: *Well, my little man, what happened at school to-day.* Five-year-old: *Well, Dad, Miss Small was leaning over my desk looking at my drawing and one of her lungs fell out.*

# ENROLMENTS OF 1937

| PUPIL'S NAME                  | PUPIL'S AGE |        | Religious denomination | Name of previous School and date of leaving | PARENT OR GUARDIAN           |                             |                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------|------------------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                               | Years       | Months |                        |   | Name                         | Residence                   | Occupation                      |
| Milton Moffatt                | 6           | 10     | E.C.                   | P.S. Campbelltown 12/36                     | Glen Moffatt                 | Badajoz St.                 | Com. Trav.                      |
| Graeme Hamilton               | 8           | 1      | Pres.                  | P.S. Bononia 12/36                          | Alex Hamilton                | 48 Mulling St.              | Contract                        |
| Paul Mullaly                  | 5           | 5      | R.C.                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> school                      | Jos. Mullaly                 | Ross St (48)                | Fireman                         |
| Ronald Gamble                 | 5           | 6      | E.C.                   | " "   | Will <sup>m</sup> Gamble     | 60 Morrison <sup>rd</sup>   | Ironmould                       |
| Frank Cutler                  | 5           | 0      | E.C.                   | " "   | Fred Cutler                  | 125 Morrison <sup>rd</sup>  | Emp. Wat <sup>er</sup>          |
| Mal <sup>colm</sup> Elliott   | 5           | 1      | E.C.                   | " "   | Har <sup>vey</sup> Elliott   | Commerc <sup>ial</sup> Bk   | Bank Man                        |
| Reginald Reid                 | 5           | 1      | E.C.                   | " "   | Alf <sup>red</sup> Reid      | 42 Ashburn <sup>rd</sup>    | Wirework <sup>er</sup>          |
| John Bernard                  | 5           | 1      | Pres.                  | " "   | Her <sup>bert</sup> Bernard  | 7 Bernard <sup>av</sup>     | Post <sup>al</sup> Mech.        |
| Will <sup>m</sup> Cassidy     | 5           | 0      | E.C.                   | " "   | Jack Cassidy                 | 9 Gerish St                 | Emp. Col.                       |
| Douglas Hall                  | 5           | 0      | E.C.                   | " "   | John Hall                    | 34 R. Edw <sup>ard</sup> St | Sug <sup>ar</sup> -Co Carpenter |
| Joyce Ward                    | 6           | 10     | E.C.                   | Hunter's Hill Conv <sup>nt</sup> 12/36      | Nath <sup>an</sup> Ward      | 32 Mary St <sup>h</sup>     | Mill Ad                         |
| Patricia Shirley              | 5           | 3      | R.C.                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> school                      | John Shirley                 | 163 Victoria Rd             | Hosp. Att                       |
| Barb <sup>bara</sup> Godfrey  | 6           | 1      | E.C.                   | P.S. Bononia 12/36                          | Chas Godfrey                 | 17 Venus St                 | Carpenter                       |
| Nolene Denovan                | 5           | 1      | E.C.                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> school                      | Har <sup>vey</sup> Denovan   | 5 Makinson St               | Fitter                          |
| Ishbel Boyd                   | 5           | 4      | Bapt                   | " "   | Will <sup>m</sup> Boyd       | 6 Coulter St                | Labourer                        |
| Valerie Moss                  | 5           | 1      | E.C.                   | " "   | Walt <sup>er</sup> Moss      | 9 Cowell St                 | Engineer                        |
| Nancy Stewart                 | 5           | 4      | Meth                   | " "   | Jos. Stewart                 | Ashburn Rd                  | Nil (Invalid)                   |
| Pat <sup>ricia</sup> Williams | 5           | 4      | E.C.                   | " "   | Will <sup>m</sup> Williams   | 19 Warner St                | Emp. Court                      |
| Betty Connell                 | 6           | 8      | Meth                   | P.S. Nth Ryde 12/36                         | Ethel Connell                | Badajoz Rd.                 | Dom. D.                         |
| Greta Hamilton                | 5           | 6      | Pres.                  | P.S. Bononia 12/36                          | Alex Hamilton                | 48 Mulling St               | Contract                        |
| Marg <sup>aret</sup> Johnston | 5           | 1      | Pres.                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> school                      | Thar <sup>on</sup> Johnston  | 40 R. Edw <sup>ard</sup> St | Sales                           |
| Har <sup>old</sup> Brett      | 6           | 5      | E.C.                   | P.S. Nth Ryde 12/36                         | Oscar Brett                  | Creedy Rd.                  | Signwrit <sup>er</sup>          |
| Jean Fairbairn                | 5           | 6      | E.C.                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> school                      | Dan <sup>iel</sup> Fairbairn | 9 Harvard St                | Lorry Dr.                       |

An extract from the School Register of 1937, showing boys with enrolment numbers from 1256 to 1265, girls from 1203 to 1213. It can be noted that the careful handwriting is that of the famous teacher, Miss Clara Morgan. The stated occupation of the parent is likewise of interest. — By courtesy of Bruce Ridings Principal, Gladesville Public School.

## THE DAY THE SKY FELL IN

Well, it wasn't exactly the sky that fell it, but it must have felt something like it for teacher Amelia Parker and an eight year old Beryl Walker. One day in October 1937 a fanlight and part of the ceiling came crashing down in the classroom. Both persons needed medical treatment, but Miss Parker steadfastly refused to leave her post until the day's lessons were finished. They were the days when most boys at least went to and from school in bare feet, so those pupils had to be careful where they trod.

Did you know that the square root symbol derives from the first letter of *radix*, the Latin word for root? that the *?* comes from the letter *Q*, the beginning of the Latin word *QUAESTIO* meaning a question?

#### DEEP IMPRESSIONS REMAIN FOR LIFE

It is amazing how many ex-pupils, whatever their age, retain images of décor in their classrooms and of poems they learned by heart. Unforgettable too are some of their teachers. Judith Pritchard (born 1938) recalls: *Miss Best was my class teacher, very nice, a big lady with short-bobbed hair, very reminiscent of my grandmother. Even so, when we marched in the playground to her chant of left... left..., we would sing "Left, left, we've got to get rid of Miss Best! Right, right, we've got to do it to-night!" I still recall a black and white picture on the wall depicting the Lady of Shalott looking into the mirror and seeing Lancelot riding along the river on his way to Camelot. It gives me pleasure to be able still to recite that poem by Alfred Tennyson. We also learned, as did my mother, Abou Ben Adam, Hohenlinden, Lockinvar, as well as Dorothea Mackellar's My Country and Magic. We looked forward to visits from the Fun Doctor who played the piano, at times apparently to us with his bulbous nose. We also enjoyed visits from the father of one of the girls, Hinemoa Mahomet. He was a tall handsome man who performed awesome acts of a fire-eating! We learned dancing in the hall. I particularly enjoyed the maypole and the confusion we got into if we forgot the colours of the ribbons. We played outdoor sport, basketball and tunnel ball. As the oldest child in the family I was expected to set an example to my three siblings. Not so on one memorable occasion. In my enthusiasm to answer a question from the teacher, I was waving my hand vigorously to attract her attention. I had forgotten that I still had a pencil in my hand. It flew out of my grip across the room — and hit the teacher. When I got into trouble, I was mortified. She didn't believe my protestations that it was an accident, so I spent the rest of the morning in the proverbial corner.*



The scene is the Soldiers Memorial Hall, in 1950. Sixth Class girls, Judith Pritchard and Pauline Taylor, present flowers to retiring teacher, Mrs Jones. Under that teacher's organisation the school pupils at Gladesville had been active in preparing and dispatching Food Parcels for Britain to aid needy families through the exigencies of the post-war era. — Photo by courtesy of Judith Pritchard.

#### A POPULAR TEACHER WHO KEPT PUPILS IN TRIM

Jim Trim was a popular figure at Gladesville School for many years, from 1915 to 1959. He is remembered for his advice on many things including this one: *If you forgot your hanky, use your sleeve.* After his retirement he came back as what members of the teaching profession called a *retread*. The fact that Trim Place in front of the school was named after him is an indication of the esteem in which he was held by parents, teachers and pupils alike. Ex-pupils regard him as the *Mr Chips* of Gladesville.

#### WARTIME MEASURES

In 1942, shortly after the Japanese bombed Darwin, all window panes in the school were shatter-proofed. Air raid trenches and shelters were dug by parents and volunteers and pupils were trained what to do during an air raid. Dorothy Davidson (nee Hellyer born Gladesville 1937) recalls: *During air raid drill each pupil was equipped with an emergency bag holding a rubber peg to bite on and cotton wool to plug the ears to relieve the eardrums from the din of exploding bombs, also part of a stocking to hold the wool firm. Soon after the trenches had been dug, there was a torrential downpour of rain which completely filled the trenches and most private backyard shelters with water that took weeks and weeks to soak away.* There was an air raid siren on Victoria Road by the school outside Weil's hardware store. The air raid sirens rang on two occasions: one on the night of May 31 1942 when Japanese mini-submarines entered Sydney Harbour, the other, five days later when its mother ship shelled the Eastern Suburbs, there was great consternation that our shores would be invaded, but these alarms occurred outside school hours, so that the pupils were not directly affected. Most of them at home in bed slept through the wailing sirens.

#### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Unknown to the vast majority of pupils and parents was the Punishment Book in which teachers were obliged to register all cases of corporal punishment. Though cases of extreme punishment were surely reported, it can be safely said that minor ones were often never entered. In former days six cuts of the bamboo cane (three on each hand) was the maximum which could be given on one day, and then only for a most serious offence. In 1968 there were just eight cases recorded for various reasons: one cut for disobedience or rudeness, two for holding a boy down while another punched him, two for stealing from Coles Chain Store in Victoria Road opposite the school. In 1969 there were 31 cases recorded. There were obviously fewer angelic pupils enrolled that year or more cases faithfully recorded. Offences included spitting at other children, fighting, using vile language, punching girls, misbehaviour in Scripture, fighting, leaving school without permission and insolence.



Above right — Teacher: *Now, boys. What is meant by a mental occupation?* First pupil: *One in which we use our minds, Sir.* Teacher: *And a manual occupation?* Second pupil: *One in which we use our hands, Sir.* Teacher: *Very good, now which of these occupations is mine? Pause. Come now. What do I use most in teaching you boys?* Third pupil: *Your cane, Sir.* The time-honoured Biblical principle of Spare the rod and Spoil the child is no longer used. Now every pupil behaves perfectly.

#### BREVITIES

In 1944 Gladesville became a Central School with 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> classes. These remained until 1956 when a Meadowbank High School was opened. In 1963 co-educational classes began and remain. Over the years the grounds and buildings have been extended to accommodate increasing enrolments. By 1955 more than 1000 children attended the school. In 1994 a War Memorial Garden in the grounds was funded by the Federal Government as part of Australia Remembers 1939-1945. In 1986 40% of the enrollees were of ethnic background. At the time of writing, 2004, the percentage is 45%. These pupils come from 36 different language backgrounds. The top three are Chinese, Italian and Greek. The strongest unifying force in the school is the English language, though there are special classes in Italian held on Saturdays. Each year the school proudly celebrates a Multicultural Day featuring a luncheon of international cuisine and children dressed in costumes reflecting the culture of their family. The current enrolment of the school is 310.

**DID SOMEONE BLOW THEIR TOP AT SCHOOL?**

It is not unknown for teachers to blow their top at school (albeit with feigned rage), but no one save Mother Nature was to blame when at Easter 1975 the roof of one of the school buildings was blown off in a gale. The roof was literally lifted up, carried on in the air for some distance and then unceremoniously dumped onto Victoria Road. Fortunately, no one was injured in the process. A light pole was struck and part of a fence destroyed.

**THE INFORMATION AGE**

Over the past few decades things have decidedly changed. There has been a technological revolution in the field of information and in both teaching and learning aids. Though clerical assistants have freed teachers from non-teaching tasks they earlier performed, they, the teachers, are busier than ever. The old teaching aids of chalk and talk have been supplemented by all manner of audio-visual devices permitting insight into an endless world of information and knowledge. With the advent of computers in the school as well as in the home there is a tendency towards less teaching and more learning. In the homes of old there were few books, perhaps only a Bible. Never has there been so much information available to an individual at the touch of a finger.

Today most children enjoy a home library, information from television and the inter-net, so that there is a greater access to knowledge as well as an opportunity for more learning outside of school than inside the classroom. Such opportunities allow for individual differences, which the school at large cannot match. Long ago George Bernard Shaw claimed that *if you teach a man anything, he will never learn*. Edward Gibbon, the great English historian, wrote that *every person has two educations, one which he receives from others and one, more important, which he gives himself*. To-day learning or self-teaching is paramount. The speed with which the young become computer illiterate, for example, is amazing to their seniors. Nevertheless, there is more parental involvement in their children's studies than ever before. In general parents are genuinely pleased to help, as long as they get a good mark! The words which parents fear most are those from their son or daughter bringing home news like this: *Sorry, folks! You failed again in my assignment!*



*We are happy to go to school, but we are also happy at home, especially in the holidays. So say the Pritchard girls in the backyard of their home in Augustine Street. In the background the reserve where Tarban Creek, the essential fresh water source of pioneer days, once flowed. — Photo by courtesy of Elvie Pritchard.*

## CULTURAL EXCURSION FOR PUPILS

To-day we embark on a journey on foot to embrace some of the earliest history of this district. These notes have been prepared for the teachers and for each participant, schoolboys and girls and interested adults, all also provided with a list of written questions to be answered along the way. Cameras and hand computers are encouraged. It will be an extensive, hopefully memorable walk, so participants have been advised to carry a snack pack and drink with them and advised to keep any rubbish or leftovers in their carry bag. We will leave the back of the school and walk down Pearson Street 400 metres down to the River Park and later wend our way to Wharf Road and down to the waterfront.

We first head for the Walabi Track, read the information presented there and then and then move on to tread the grounds of the original inhabitants, a tribe known as the Wallumedegal. Trees grew in profusion, the taller ones, unless destroyed by fire or lightning, lived out their full life untouched by human hand for centuries. Smaller ones might have been felled or bark stripped from big ones by the Aboriginal mogo or stone axe. Such bark was used for the covering of the natives temporary gunyahs or mia mias , for shields and for canoes.

From time immemorial the Aborigines had lived in harmony with nature. Fresh water creeks running down into the river, abundant flora and fauna and game served them well. What the original inhabitants took from the waters would have scarcely affected the marine population. If there was a scarcity of game on land, there was always the riverbank with oysters, mussels and pipis, the waters abundant in crabs, eels, lobsters and fish of various species. The natives were expert in studying the ways of catching fish. Documentary evidence of the ready availability of fish in 1788 has been recorded. When the French under La Perouse were in Botany Bay shortly after the First Fleet arrived in Port Jackson one of their fishing catches was recorded: in one day nearly 2000 snapper were caught in their Seine\* net. In most seasons the waters of the river, with plenty of fish and varied crustaceans, provided bountifully for the earliest inhabitants.

At Glades Park in the creeks near the riverbank eels are still to be found to-day. In winter season when fish were scarce, natives would rely on other game such as birds and animals. Ducks in particular provided a goodly meal. Wallabies, possums and lizards, where obtainable, were part of the native diet, as were the leaves and seed of the plant *Lomandra longifolia*. The tender leaves served as a salad while the seeds were ground into a flour and cooked to make a damper. The long leaves of the same plant were woven by the women to make baskets for food gathering. The indigenes, being practically naked, were extremely hardy but in cold and rainy weather overhangs here and there by the riverbank as well as their temporary gunyahs afforded them some protection.



It is not difficult to imagine the native state of mind when they first sighted white-skinned Europeans covered in the strangest garments and travelling on the waters in largish vessels. The Europeans' first encounter with Wallumedegal natives was recorded in January 1788 when a surveying party at nearby Kissing Point was met by hostile inhabitants calling out in menacing tones *whalla whalla wai*. This signified the desire of the natives for the newcomers to keep off their hunting grounds. They talked loudly with one another and brandished their spears. The native mind was indeed perplexed.

An early encounter with the Wallumedegal indigenes took place on February 5 1788, ten days after the arrival of the First Fleet. Lieutenant William Bradley made the following note in his diary: *We landed to cook our breakfast on the opposite side to them.* [This spot in Mortlake is still called Breakfast Point]. *We made signs for them to come over and waved green boughs. Soon after, seven of them came over on two canoes and landed near our boats. They left their spears in the canoes and came to us. We tied beads, etc., about them and left them fire to dress* [that is, to prepare for cooking] *their mussels.* The natives could have come across the waters to either Putney or Tennyson Points [about the same distance]. Ten days after, it was Captain Phillip, Governor of the new Colony, who stepped ashore in present-day Gladesville and met some of the indigenes. This was at the bottom of Wharf Road in Looking-glass Bay where the event is commemorated by a plaque set into a rock.



The plaque on the rock near the bottom of Wharf Road brings to mind a momentous occasion in history, namely, the setting foot on Gladesville territory by the first European, Captain Arthur Phillip, first Governor of the Colony of New South Wales. This took place just 20 days after the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove on January 26 1788. — Photo taken on Australia Day 2004 by Valerie McAndrew (nee Moss).

TO COMMEMORATE 15 FEBRUARY 1788 WHEN CAPTAIN ARTHUR PHILLIP AND PARTY LANDED HERE AND NAMED LOOKING-GLASS BAY. ERECTED BY THE GLADESVILLE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION 1979.

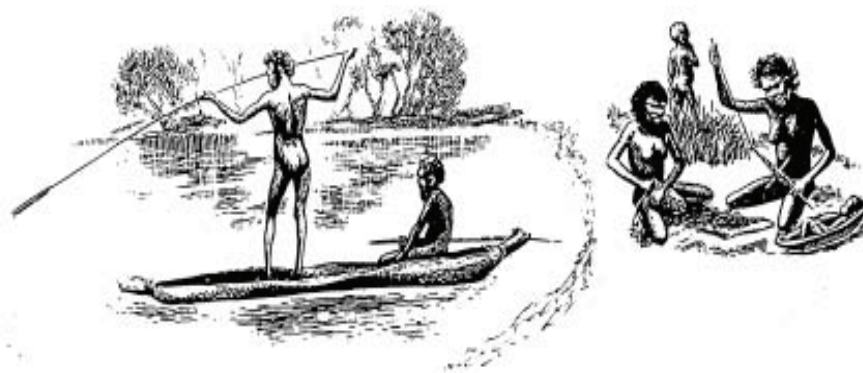
Let us go back in time 200 years before the date the memorial plaque was placed:

*We stopped at a neck of land for breakfast. We were met there by a native armed. He laid down his spear as soon as he joined us, and had more curiosity than any we had met with. He examined everything very attentively and went into all our boats from one to another. The Governor gave this man a hatchet and a looking-glass, which, when he looked into, he looked immediately behind the glass to see if any persons were there, and then pointed to the glass and the shadows which he saw in the water, signifying they were similar. — Lieutenant Bradley's Journal.*



At the entrance to the 2.4 km Waluba Track in Glades Park these youngsters armed with Aboriginal artefacts, (digging stick, hunting boomerang, light woomera, barbed spear and nulla nulla) try to imagine life in these parts before the advent of the European settlers in 1788. The Waluba Track is well named if only because there are images of *waluba* or wallabies incised into the sandstone. — Photo by author 2004.

Fish and oysters from the Parramatta River were an important source of food for the Aborigines.





The happy history hunters have succeeded in tracking down the wallabies. Pupils are asked to ponder how long it would have taken the Aborigines to create these carvings with their primitive tools.

### STILL ON THE WALUBU TRACK



There are signs along the Waluba Track to take you back to the distant past. — Photos by author.



Time to relax and make music with simple click-sticks in the reserve at Glades Bay. There was then no other musical instrument in this part of the continent. The *didgeridu*, so called after the sound produced, was known only in the tropical north of the continent, where termites conveniently hollowed out tree branches from which it was made. — Photo March 2004 by author

When the Europeans rowed on the upper reaches of the Parramatta River, the country on either side was pristine wilderness. They were amazed at the height of the trees and the colourful birds never before seen: *The trees around us were immensely large and the tops of them filled with loraquets and paraquets of exquisite beauty, which chattered to such a degree that we could scarcely hear each other speak. We fired several times, but the trees were so high that we killed very few.* — Surgeon-General White April 25 1788.

The subsequent arrival of white settlers in the area increased the indigenes' shock — a shock both cultural and linguistic. The two cultures were so different and so were the languages. Invaders were seen as depriving the indigenes of their way of life. Their freedom to wander anywhere was being limited. Their hunting grounds were being taken away; their tribal laws were mocked at; their women were being carried off; they were being expected to accept laws of property and social life which they could not understand. It is no wonder they attempted to use violence to preserve what they held dear. Official policy was to avoid clashes with the natives, but friction was inevitable. Acting in accordance with official policy Governor Phillip is considered to have dealt with the Aborigines justly and firmly. \* Historical Records of Australia Vol. I p 13. Though he himself had been speared at Manly in September 1790, he made no reprisals. Bennelong, a favourite of Phillip, often dined with him.

A report from Rose Hill in November 1791 spelled out the current situation: The Natives are pretty peaceable here — but, if they catch any of our people in the woods, they would kill them. \* Ayre's Sunday London Gazette July 15 1792. To be sure there were outrages on both sides.

### ABORIGINAL ROCK CARVINGS

If the original inhabitants disappeared soon after the advent of the Europeans, they left some marks of their presence here for thousands of years. Since they knew no form of writing, they passed on their culture from generation to generation by word of mouth and by incisions into rock faces.



Earlier generations of residents in the district certainly sighted some traces of the Aboriginal civilisation such as the stone axes and rock engravings. It was common for Aborigines to carve into rocks by water-holes, which were regularly visited for drinking and bathing and by the riverbank where a great deal of time would have been spent fishing and cooking. The grooves in the sandstone were made by diligent use of a hard volcanic rock found in the river or traded from another tribe. The rock was chosen for its size and shape.

Apart from Tarban as in Tarban Creek there was, in colonial times, no thought given in this area to the preservation of Aboriginal remains nor of assigning native names to streets or parks. Those such as Darri Reserve (off Morrison Road), and Nioka Street (off Stanbury Street), date only from comparatively recent times. *Darri*, incidentally means a track, while *nioka* refers to a green hill. The meaning of *tarban* is said to be fishing-place.

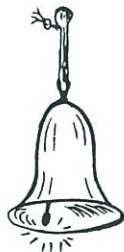
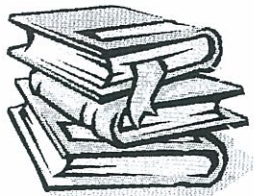
Logically there must be rock carvings below the surface waters of the river where there were once campsites, for the reason that some millennia ago the river was a freshwater stream until the seas rose through the melting of ice after the Ice Age.

The rising seas flooded the valley that was once Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River basin. Lots of carvings have also been lost through the passage of time, especially through the constant quarrying of riverbank sandstone for the building of settlers' homes and by the accumulation of debris. Very often in the past findings of artefacts by enthusiasts have never been officially reported or recorded. Others have been dutifully sent to the Sydney Museum and their identity subsequently lost to the district.

Comparatively little has been recorded about the Aborigines who lived in the area under study. Within a year of the first settlement, through contact with the newcomers, the local native population was practically annihilated, supposedly by smallpox. The natives called it *gal-gal-la*. There was no case of this disease either on board the English ships or in the incipient Colony. Was it then introduced by La Perouse's French ships which lay in Botany Bay between January 26 and March 10 1788? Those ships had arrived via Asian ports and some Pacific Islands, but again there was again no record of the disease on board ship. There is a theory that the malady which afflicted the natives so severely was not smallpox at all, but simply measles to which they had no immunity. By 1791 90% of the survivors had died from other European diseases including venereal disease introduced by the Europeans. \* John Hunter Historical Journal p. 93. / *Historical Records of New South Wales* Vol. 2 part II pp.308 & 376.



WE ALL HAD A GREAT TIME AND THESE PHOTOS  
WE WILL ALWAYS CHERISH.



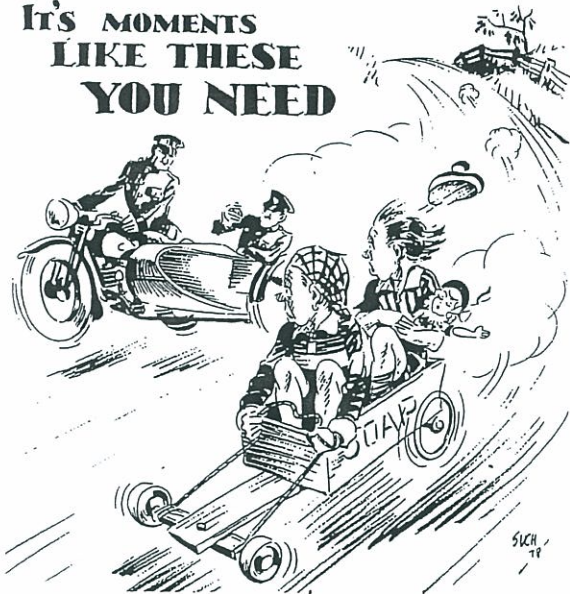
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# PUTNEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Public School from October 31 1921

**Main Source:** State Archives School Files 5/1

Once in 1914 and twice occasions in 1915 there were moves to establish schools in both Putney and Tennyson. Before then there was no local school for the children of Putney residents.



Eager for school or not, these children in Pellisier Road, Putney, had no chance of attending a local school. They would have to walk or journey to Ryde or Gladesville for their education. Their home had walls of hessian covered by a slurry of cement.

The petitions with 150 names of eligible children for a site in Tennyson came from R. Sutton of the Gladesville Progress Association, while the Putney Progress Association headed by Albert Wells, Richard Skelton, W. Douglass, Robert Clarke and George Clarke were pushing for a school to be established on the corner of Delange and Phillip Roads. The authorities decided that one school to serve both areas would be the solution, so they chose the site of the present Putney School. The land of 2 acres 2 roods and 21 perches was purchased in January 1917 at a cost of £810 from William Drury who continued to rent the cottage on the land there for 5/- weekly. He remained there for about 18 months and the old building was sold and removed for £7. Petitions continued, but the Department pointed to the problems of finance associated with the Great War and that building would be considered only after the cessation of hostilities. When the Great War was over in 1918, the locals Mr McDowell and Richard Skelton were pressing hard for their school. They reported how Ryde and Gladesville schools were overcrowded and some of their children had to sit all day in open weathersheds and that the St Chad's private school in Putney had closed.

Late in 1919 the lowest tender of £4637 by J. Burnett of Mossvale was accepted and work on a building for 250 pupils commenced on November 11 1920. The school opened on October 31 1921 with 120 pupils. Within a month the enrolments reached 138. The first teachers were Harold John Moore, Gladys Caldwell and Marguerite Gilmour. In December of the same year as the population rose to 154 the Secretary of the P. &C., Mr A. Dubos wisely suggested enlargement of the grounds by taking up six adjacent blocks on the eastern side, which were up for sale for £705. A negative answer by the powers proved to be short-sighted, four extra lots needing to be purchased in December 1928.



How they all loved school, but were already keen about the coming Xmas break.

### A LITTLE DIPLOMACY CAN GO A LONG WAY

On December 1 1922 Mrs L. K. Carter of Glenrowan, Morrison Road opposite the school wrote a letter of complaint to the Chief Inspector about Headmaster Morris. After going to the school to find out why her son had been punished, Mr Morris simply stated: *Your son Ken is bad!* These words fairly battered the ears of the mother as she recounted in her letter: *That is a dreadful thing to say! He said: But he is! To justify this he could only say he was troublesome and disobedient in school, both of which are characteristic bobble-de -boy stage. As I have known no act of my son that could be classed as bad during his lifetime and have not at any time received against him a complaint of this sort, I consider that to be called bad by this man is a great injustice to ken and most offensive to myself. Mr Morris also said he hoped I would not send Ken back to school next year. Then when I asked him to send Ken away from school now, so that I might have the matter out with the Department, he declined to do so. I resent the treatment very much and feel it is my right to bring it under your notice. I would also make a formal request that Mr Morris proves his accusation of bad against my son or make an adequate apology.*

Immediately after Mrs Carter reported to her husband that Morris had labelled her son as bad, Mr G. K. Carter went to see Mr Morris, asking him to apologise. The Head said he would do no such thing and strode off. On December 11 the Inspector called Mrs Carter to the school for an unofficial discussion with the staff. Under the guidance of the inspector she expressed her willingness to bury the hatchet and not press for an inquiry. Mr Carter was not so sure. He had two street meetings with Morris.

There was a heated exchange on each occasion. Carter also offered to drop the matter, if only the Head would apologise, but Morris remained adamant. He rubbed salt into the anxious parent's wounds by saying: *I have no regrets and nothing to apologise for. Go ahead with the inquiry.*

#### THOSE GLORIOUS YEARS AT SCHOOL

Parental thought: Schooldays are the happiest days of your life  
— if your children are old enough to attend, that is.

At the inquiry the reason for young 13-year-old Kenric Carter was explained. On November 29 Mr Morris was away at exams and Assistant Mrs Gilmour was in charge of 6th class. She had occasion to reprove one of the pupils. Ken Carter laughter laughed aloud and was sent out of the classroom by Mrs Gilmour. Later the boy refused to take part in the drill inspection being conducted by Major Reddick. After lunch, on marching into the room with the other boys, he was informed by Mrs Gilmour that she did not want him in the room, until he had apologised to her. Carter forthwith left the school and went home (across the road). At 3 o'clock he returned with a note from his mother in which she said she objected to her boy being sent home without the written authority of the Department.

The following morning the lad returned to school and Mr Morris, having been apprised of the previous day's happenings told the boy he expected him to apologise to Mrs Gilmour for his misconduct. The boy did so. It was during the lunch hour that day that Mrs Carter visited the head and was affronted by his description of her son. At the inquiry Morris told the Inspector that the boy was disobedient, sly and untruthful.

In replying officially to the complaint the Department quite rightly stated that it expected parents and teachers to co-operate in securing a good standard of conduct in the school and that incidents such as these should be amicably settled by mutual explanation and without official assistance. No doubt the 13 year old was getting too big for his boots and deserved punishment, but the Head was guilty of lack of diplomacy.

Indeed, he received an official rap over the knuckles for his poor communication skills: *It is regretted that your handling of the situation was not more tactful and that your choice of an expression was not more discreet when conveying to a mother your opinion of her son's character.*

Had the head explained the reason for Mrs Gilmour's attitude, as only came out in the inquiry, a word at home to the boy could have possibly been a better discipline than that exacted by the school.

**ONE DEFINITION OF DIPLOMACY:** Diplomacy is to do and say even the nastiest thing in the nicest way. Diplomacy is the most essential article for a teacher to pack into his kitbag.



A scene at the ferry wharf at Kissing Point, Putney. One of the early traditions about this spot is that one of our early Governors kissed his wife on getting out of a boat, thus giving to the place the name of Kissing Point. The accepted explanation, perhaps less interesting, certainly less romantic, is that it refers to that point in the Parramatta River where the depth of the water begins to reduce considerably. At this point sea-going vessels of the time would tend to *kiss* the riverbed in spots. Such *kissing* is a maritime term for *touching lightly*. Captain John Hunter (later Governor Hunter) applied the term. This explanation is recorded on a monument established in 1988 by the Ryde Municipal Council in Kissing Point Park, Putney. Since early travel to Ryde was by vessels, settlement began close to the shore. The spread of settlement to present Top Ryde came later and with it eventually a change of name.

Putney on the Parramatta in its hey-day when the Annual Head of the River was run among the Great Public Schools (actually Private Schools with the inclusion of one State school, Sydney Boys' High). The race from Putney to Mortlake started by Walker's Estate Wharf. In times of far fewer sporting events this was well patronised with hosts of people following the race from ferries. When the sculling races were on the same stretch of the river, people paid £1 a head for the privilege of watching from a ferry-boat.



Carefree days on board the Kirribilli following the rowing regatta in 1910 with Putney park on the riverbank in the background. The vessel was built by Morts Dock , Balmain, and carried up to 896 passengers

#### A LANGUAGE PROBLEM

In December 1926 Mr J.H. Young complained to the Department about the treatment of his daughter at the hands of teacher, Mrs Danks: *Some time ago this teacher listened to a report by two small boys that my girl, Binay, used bad language to them, whilst they were on their way home from school. Next day she was made to stand out in front of the class, while the teacher told the class that they should not play with her at any time. I sent this teacher a letter asking for an apology and threatened to write to you and also take legal proceedings. I received no reply or apology. Later she told my girl she was full of herself and she was not going to teach her any more. Now, to-day, my little girl was asked to pack up her books and things and was sent home for the alleged offence of spitting in the basin of the drinking fountain , which my girl said she could not help. The little girl has paralysis down her left side; her left arm and hand are practically useless. Her left leg and foot are deformed and the defect extends to the intestines.*

*It seems to Mrs Young and myself a downright shame that her parents should be treated in the way they have been. A few weeks ago another of my children wanted to go to school (he is not quite six). I sent him with my girl and he was sent home again.*

#### THE TRADITION OF INVENTIVE PLAYGROUND RHYMES

The speed with which young children create and learn playground rhymes is incredible. Already in Kindergarten infants are bringing them home on their lips to the delight and at times the fright of their parents. For example:

*Dictation! dictation! dictation! — A man had a big operation.*

*They took off his arms (legs, nose ...) and put in some palms, (pegs, hose ...)*

*They took out his eyes (gizzards ...) and put in some pies (lizards ...)*

Rhymes come in and out of fashion and somehow catch on from school to school. Sometimes it is just a new slant to an old nursery rhyme such as:

*Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.*

*All the King's horses and all the King's men said:*

*Goodness! Scrambled eggs again!*  
**OR** *Kookaburra sits on the electric wire;*  
*Kookaburra sits with his pants on fire*  
*Ouch Kookaburra! Ouch kookaburra! How gay your life must be!*

On December 8 an inquiry was duly held, where the allegations were presented and the other side of the question heard. Teacher Mrs Dank's account was very interesting: *Yes I did hear about Binay and bad language, but as that happened outside school, I took no notice. Shortly after Mrs young came to school ordering me to punish the informer. On my refusal she became angry and somewhat offensive and accused me of cruelty to her child, but did not indicate particulars. Not at any time did I lay hands on Binay or send her for punishment. Subsequently I heard the child using bad language in the schoolroom and scolded her in class, saying that, if I heard a child using bad language, I would not speak or play with her. Then came mr Young's letter. I certainly did take notice of this letter. The next incident was that of the soiling of the drinking fountain. The child deliberately spat on the bubbler and laughingly admitted it in front of the class. When the children complained of her action at the fountain, I certainly scolded her and a s a mark of disapproval I sent her home at 3L20 p.m. I said: When you come back tomorrow, tell the girls how sorry you are and we will have you in our class again. I did not use the expression "of being full of herself". Not in any way did I forbid the child from attending the school. The non-reception of the child under six does not concern me. I know nothing about it. May I add that Mrs Young has made several visits to this school to interview the staff (myself and others) and on such occasions her manner has been most offensive and menacing.*

Headmaster, Mr James added that in interviews Mrs Young had been unreasonable and abusive. He added: *Binay has now left this school. Though weak in body, Binay is not irresponsible.*

The Department informed Mrs Young that no reasonable grounds had been found for her complaints, that had she approached the headmaster in a reasonable manner, she might have satisfied herself, that her daughter had not been unfairly treated as represented.

#### **A LESSON IN GRAMMAR**

Johnny Jones was having a nice little doze in class, when the teacher suddenly pounced on him with this question about grammar : *"Name me two pronouns !"* John came to, abruptly saying *"Who ? Me ?"* *"Quite right !"* said the teacher. *"I am pleasantly surprised"*. So was John.

#### **VEXATION OVER NO COMPENSATION**

On November 19 1928 William Blake aged 11 had a large glazed picture fall on his head. It was a windy day and the picture had been rocking in the wind when it fell sideways on one boy without causing injury, onto the hand of another without ill effects and finally fell cornerwise onto the barefoot of the above-mentioned, inflicting a deep gash. The teacher gave first aid and sent for a doctor as well as the boy's mother. The Doctor gave further aid to the wound and transported the victim home. There he gave the lad anaesthetic, stitched the wound and had the patient taken for an X-ray.

The parent, rightfully it would seem, sent an account to the Minister of Education for some £12 for the service car, doctor, medicine, radiography etc. but the heartless Department refused to pay any compensation at all, saying that, as the accident was not the result of neglect, it was not responsible. Was the wind an act of God?

Two months later there was another claim for compensation, namely, from Rachel, teacher of needlework, who sprained her ankle on the way home from school on January 30 1929. Her claim was denied by the Government Insurance Office. She was at default because the injury was sustained while climbing over a five foot fence at the school. Why she did so is a mystery.

#### **PUTNEY PUPILS AND TEACHERS CAUGHT OUT IN SPORTS RORT**

Each year the P.S.A.A.A. (the Public Schools Amateur Athletic Association) held inter school sports where the best of each school met for competition. It was a rule that, if 25% of the pupils attended the athletic meeting, each purchasing a ticket, then the school could be closed for the day. In October 1929 quite a number of pupils at Putney were keen to attend the event and teachers seemed enthusiastic to sell the necessary number of tickets in order to close the school. In fact 91 out of 348 pupils had tickets. On the day in question, when the school was closed, a Departmental officer checked on the attendance: only nine children and not a single teacher! The Headmaster was duly reprimanded.

To celebrate the Sesqui-centenary of European settlement in Australia every schoolchild in the country was issued with a coloured pictorial magazine entitled *An Historic Retrospect on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Founding of Australia.*



The few kids who occasionally wagged school could generally be found by the Truant Inspector down by the riverside, either in Putney Park where they could have a free ride on the punt to Mortlake and back, or down by the riverside opposite the Lady Walker home in Concord.



The view from Kissing Point one crisp winter morning when still waters reflected the scene on the land. Photographed by Jack McAndrew in July 1943.

The teacher was explaining the moods of verbs (the indicative and the subjunctive). Having written on the board an example of the latter, "*Let the cow be taken into the milking-shed*", he asked one lad: "*What mood, James ?*" *Please, Sir, the cow.*" came the immediate answer.



The Putney-Mortlake Ferry which began service in 1926 on the way to Putney Park. It is the very last punt in Sydney, guided by steel cables. A favorite with many, since there is no charge for the 400-metre crossing, neither for passengers nor vehicles. — Photo by author.

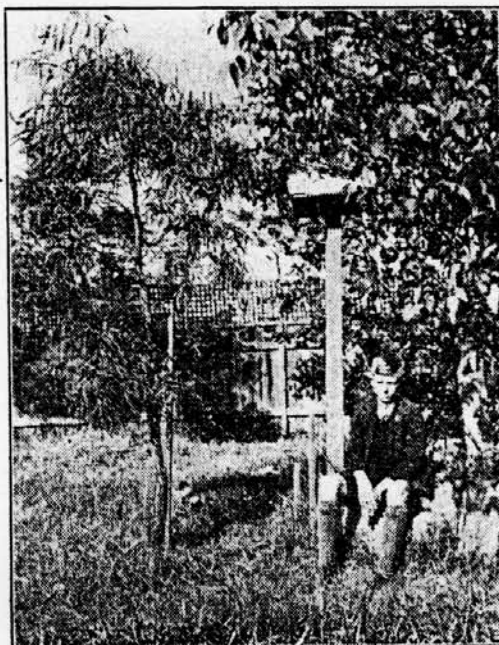
## ARBOR DAY.

Listen while I tell you a story about trees.

I was travelling through the Araluen Valley, in that great gorge between the Great Divide and the coast near Bateman's Bay. It had been a grand day, a day of dazzling sunshine in a land of running streams and mountain sides of rich, luxuriant growth. We had lingered too long in these delightful surroundings, and so had to hurry in the dusk to pitch camp before the night overtook us. As luck would have it, we found an ideal spot beside a brooklet, and close to the finest group of Araluen blue gums that I have ever seen. It was truly a feast for the eyes, as I discovered next morning. But, beautiful as they were, they were also tantalising.

Not content with the photograph my mind had made (and it was a talkie and a movie, too, with the noise of the friendly little brook and the babbling birds), I tried so hard to gather some seeds to bring back with me. Why shouldn't I have some of this Araluen loveliness in my own backyard? But it was of no avail that I searched and searched, for the trees were so tall and straight that it was impossible to reach them, and neither I nor my companions were brave enough to hazard the ascent of the slippery stems.

Somewhat disappointed, we reluctantly left the valley for our return to Sydney. The thought of this magnificent tree haunted me. I wanted a real Araluen blue gum of my own. At length I remembered that I had an acquaintance in the district who might be able to procure some seeds for me. In haste and excitement I wrote. Could he? Would he? There must be some trees with low branches. By return mail came a rather puzzled reply. Of course, he would be delighted to oblige, but, alas! he knew not the tree. Could I send a description, so that he could identify it and procure the booty? The description went post haste.



In the School Plantation.

Photo.—G. A. WILLIAMS.

### THE MOST MEMORABLE PUPILS' NAMES OVER THE DECADES

Rhoda Dendron, Florrie Bunda and Teresa Green were always in the school garden; Ella Quent spoke so very well and as for Dick Shunary — well, he was just full of words. The most charitable pupils were Jennie Rossity and Phil Anthropic. Bennie Faction was another who was always willing to do some good for somebody. Eva Lution was popular with some teachers, but never really accepted in Scripture classes. Una Versal was definitely the best all-rounder. Sarah Nade and Con Tralto were the pick of the school choir, while Anna Mation and Viv Acious were the liveliest children. One highly-strung girl noted for her emotional outbursts was Hester Ical. Phil E. Buster was a rather lawless type and Phyllis Stein a most ignorant person. There were some interesting pupils from overseas: Val Kyrie was like a Norse Goddess; May Onnaise, a French girl, was a great *flavourite* with the boys; a Greek girl named Polly Glot spoke various languages, while Matt Adore was a lad absolutely obsessed with cattle. Al E. Barber came somewhere from the Middle East and Jack Aranda originated from Brazil. Ella Gant was the best dressed girl. Annie Mosity was frequently at odds with others. Anna Exic was the thinnest girl, while Ella Phant was just the opposite. The most enthusiastic stamp-collector was Phil Ateley and there was a boy who used to be always borrowing money, Owen Moore.

### CURIOUS QUESTIONS

1. Did you know that the question mark is a symbol derived from the letter *q* being an abbreviation of the Latin word *quaestio*, meaning a question?
2. Did you know that the mathematical sign for the square root came from the letter *r* which is an abbreviation for the Latin word *radix* meaning root ?
3. Have you ever thought about the abbreviation of the word *number* as, for example, No 1? It is certainly not the shortening of the English *number*, but of the Latin *numero*, which means *by number*. Correctly, it is written as *no* (not *no.*) which makes it the same form as the negative *no*. Confused ? Well, that's English, which, of course, is not always *numero uno* in terms of logic.
4. Why is the Latin word *dux* used for the leading scholar in the school? It means leader, that is, the one scholastically in front of all others.
5. What is the difference between a schoolteacher and a train driver? One trains the mind, while the other minds the train!

**STORY TOLD IN THE LADIES STAFF ROOM:** A 40-odd-year-old man sees a beautiful woman teacher at the Putney shopping centre and asks: "Wow! Where have you been all my life?" "Well," she replied. "For a good half of it I wasn't even born!"

### DINNER DATE

*One morning fine I met my thrill; 'twas up there on Weemala Hill.  
Her cheeky look, her bright attire really set my heart on fire.*

*And so enthusiastically I invited her to dine with me  
And with no fears of gaining weight she ate and ate and ate and ate.*

*I realized that she adored me, the way she clung and clawed me,  
Showing hidden depths of passion in the most abandoned fashion.*

*But now, alas, my love has flown, and once more I am all alone;  
But pray that one day once again I'll meet  
That lovely rainbow parakeet!*

Jack Egan

## THE INFORMATION AGE

Over the past few decades things have decidedly changed. There has been a technological revolution in the field of information and in both teaching and learning aids. Though clerical assistants have freed teachers from non-teaching tasks they earlier performed, they, the teachers, are busier than ever. The old teaching aids of chalk and talk have been supplemented by all manner of audio-visual devices permitting insight into an endless world of information and knowledge. With the advent of computers in the school as well as in the home there is a tendency towards less teaching and more learning. In the homes of old there were few books, perhaps only a Bible. Never has there been so much information available to an individual at the touch of a finger.

Today most children enjoy a home library, information from television and the inter-net, so that there is a greater access to knowledge as well as an opportunity for more learning outside of school than inside the classroom. Such opportunities allow for individual differences, which the school at large cannot match. Long ago George Bernard Shaw claimed that *if you teach a man anything, he will never learn*. Edward Gibbon, the great English historian, wrote that *every person has two educations, one which he receives from others and one, more important, which he gives himself*.

To-day learning or self-teaching is paramount. The speed with which the young become computer illiterate, for example, is amazing to their seniors. Nevertheless, there is more parental involvement in their children's studies than ever before. In general parents are genuinely pleased to help, as long as they get a good mark!

## A LITTLE BIT OF ADVICE TO ALL, BIG OR SMALL

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

1. *Speak to people. There is nothing so nice as a cheerful word of greeting.*
2. *Smile at people. It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 12 to smile.*
3. *Call people by name. The sweetest music to anyone's ear is the sound of their name.*
4. *Be friendly and helpful. If you have friends, be friendly.*
5. *Be cordial and courteous. Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.*
6. *Be genuinely interested in people. You can like almost anyone if you try.*
7. *Be generous with praise, cautious with criticism.*
8. *Be considerate with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other person's and the right one.*
9. *Be alert to give good service. What counts most in life is what you do for others.*
10. *Add to these a good sense of humour, a big dose of tolerance, a dash of humility and understanding and you will be rewarded.*

The Inspector was quizzing the class in Arithmetic: "Now, children, I wonder who can tell me what *average* is." For a while there was deep silence. Then one lad came up with this: "Please, Sir, it's a thing you lay eggs on." The astonished visitor inquired: "What makes you say that, my boy?" Well, Sir, my Dad says that our old hen lays six eggs a week on the average."

A proud young pupil announced to his mates that his Dad had the juiciest watermelons in Putney. One of them pressed him for further information: "Oh yeah, just how does he get so much water into them?" "He just plants them in the spring." came the answer.

Extracts from a sixth-class girl's autograph book in 1915, some probably learned from parents: (i) *He who Mrs to take a kiss has Mr a thing he ought not to Miss.* (ii) *In your chain of golden friendship regard me as a link.* (iii) *May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live.* (iv) *A cheerful mind, a loving heart; some work and time to do it. A place to sleep and time to eat; that's life for me. Here's to it!* (v) *In your chain of golden friendship regard me as a link.* (vi) *Little grain of powder, little daubs of paint make a girl's complexion look like what it ain't.* (vii) *Old friends are surest and old times are sweetest.* (viii) *May your joys be as vast as the ocean and your sorrows as light as its foam.* (ix) *When making footprints in the sand, some leave the mark of a great soul and others a big heel.*

### CULTURAL EXCURSION FOR PUPILS AND ADULTS ALIKE

There is interest galore in days of yore, so let us embark on a journey on foot to embrace some of the early history of this district. These notes have been prepared for the teachers and for each participant, schoolboys and girls and interested adults, all also provided with a list of written questions to be answered along the way. Even with the inevitable collusion that is bound to occur en route, all will learn something from the experience. Cameras and hand computers are encouraged. It will be an extensive, hopefully memorable walk, so participants have been advised to carry a snack pack and drink with them and advised to keep any rubbish or leftovers in their carry bag. .

We leave from the school gate and use the crossing over **Morrison Road**. The latter, like Morrison Bay, was named after Private Archibald Morrison of the New South Wales Corps who was granted 55 acres north of Morrison Bay on March 14, 1795. We turn left into **Delange Road**, which is a French name referring to *a napkin or swaddling clothes*. When this street was formed, it was part of an estate owned by a French person of that name. When that estate was formed in 1856 as part of the Village of Eugenie in 1856, it was called Napoleon Street, after Emperor Louis Napoleon III of France whose troops had fought with the British against the Russians in the Crimean War of 1854-1856. Since the name honoured the Emperor, it was made the widest of all the other roads in the estate. Pellisier Road, for example, is much narrower.

The reason for the French name of this and other streets in the subdivision was because the vendor was a Frenchman named Delange. After some time all the French names, save Pellisier, were replaced by English ones, but Delange was given the honour instead of Napoleon.

As we move along Delange Road, we come to the corner of **Pellisier Road**. Pellisier is named after a Field Marshal who distinguished himself in the Crimean War. According to French history books, Pellisier captured Sebastopol during the Crimean War of 1854-1856. According to British history books, however, it was the British who played the most significant role in this campaign. Note that Pelissier's name was misspelled on the sales plan in 1856 as Pellisier and the incorrect spelling has remained ever since. The French word *pelissier* means a maker of fur-lined coats.

It is thought that there used to be iron gates on stone pillars at the western end of Pellisier Road marking the entrance to the Delange Estate which extended as far as Putney Point. At present-day 45-49 Pellisier Road, overlooking the Parramatta River, stood the sandstone building built for Eugene Delange and his family in 1848. The sturdy edifice built from material that abounded by the riverbank was poorly maintained for decades and for a long time used simply as a storehouse before its being demolished in 1980. Since that road was simply a private road, it was of limited width and now too narrow for modern traffic and parking.

While the advertisement for the sale of the Delange Estate was impressive and would have distinctly great appeal to modern readers, would-be purchasers in those days would have found the place full of trees and bush and the roads most primitive. In addition, this area on the north side of the harbour, though beautiful, was distinctly isolated and devoid of transport. The only practical means of communication with Sydney or Parramatta was by river boat. It would be a quarter of a century before the Gladesville Bridge was opened. Despite some sales of farmlets few people took up residence. After the passing of Eugene and Honaria Delange the bulk of the estate remained with Delange's son, Eugene John, until 1878 when 101 acres were sold to Phillip Walker for £4100. With a change of some street names and addition of others Walker resold soon afterwards. The Delange Estate that went on sale in 1879 was enlarged by Walker after the purchase of a part of 50 acres by the river originally granted to John Callaghan in 1792.

### **AT THE RIVER**

At the bottom of Delange Road we reach the Parramatta River originally part of a compact estuarine system in a natural state, which included tidal mud flats, salt marshes, mangroves and casuarina woodland. These habitat communities were essential to a wide variety of animal life such as water birds, oysters, prawns and fish.

We cross the aptly named Waterview Street and enter the parkland by the river. The ferry that plies between Parramatta and Sydney Cove has just left.



We can walk down to the wharf and view the river. Directly opposite is the grand old Lady Walker Home fringed by mangroves. — Photos by author.



The Lady Walker Home. This scene was featured in the American made film, *The Great Gatsby*, shot in Australia in 2013. — Photo by author.

As we walk westward, we find a plaque commemorating the first landing by Europeans at Kissing Point. When the Europeans rowed on the upper reaches of the Parramatta River, the country on either side was pristine wilderness. They were amazed at the height of the trees and the colourful birds never before seen: *The trees around us were immensely large and the tops of them filled with loraquets and paraquets of exquisite beauty, which chattered to such a degree that we could scarcely hear each other speak. We fired several times, but the trees were so high that we killed very few.* — Surgeon-General White April 25 1788.

The subsequent arrival of white settlers in the area increased the indigenes' shock — a shock both cultural and linguistic. The two cultures were so different and so were the languages. Invaders were depriving the indigenes of their way of life. Their freedom to wander anywhere was being limited. Their hunting grounds were being taken away; their tribal laws were mocked at; their women were being carried off; they were being expected to accept laws of property and social life which they could not understand. It is no wonder they attempted to use violence to preserve what they held dear.

Official policy was to avoid clashes with the natives, but friction was inevitable. Acting in accordance with official policy Governor Phillip is considered to have dealt with the Aborigines justly and firmly. \* Historical Records of Australia Vol. I p. 13. Though he himself had been speared at Manly in September 1790, he made no reprisals. Bennelong, a favourite of Phillip, often dined with him. A report from Rose Hill in November 1791 spelled out the current situation: *The Natives are pretty peaceable here — but, if they catch any of our people in the woods, they would kill them.* \* Ayre's Sunday London Gazette July 15 1792. There were outrages on both sides.

Comparatively little has been recorded about the Aborigines who lived in the area under study. Within a year of the first settlement, through contact with the newcomers, the local native population was decimated, supposedly by smallpox. The natives called it *gal-gal-la*. There was no case of this disease either on board the English ships or in the incipient Colony. Was it then introduced by La Perouse's French ships which lay in Botany Bay between January 26 and March 10 1788? Those ships had arrived via Asian ports and some Pacific Islands, but again there was again no record of the disease on board ship.

There is a theory that the malady which afflicted the natives so severely was not smallpox, but simply measles to which they had no immunity. By 1791 90% of the survivors had died from other European diseases including venereal disease introduced by the Europeans. \* John Hunter Historical Journal p. 93. / *Historical Records of New South Wales* Vol. 2 part II pp. 308 & 376.

### **THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME KISSING POINT**

It is not long ago that Putney-ites and Ryde people in general believed firmly in a romantic version or two of the origin of the name Kissing Point. The origin current at the time the author was resident in Putney, namely in the 1940s and 1950s, was associated with the visit of Governor Macquarie to these shores. The Governor had allegedly alighted from his vessel at what is now Kissing Point at the bottom of Delange Road.

He had decided to spend some time in the area, and, with a tender kiss, he bade farewell to his wife who was to return to Sydney Town. For a long time this and similar stories persisted not only in local legend but also in newspapers and even radio as exemplified below when our famous poet, Banjo Paterson, recounted local history in a show called *On the River* in July 1935:

*The Seine in Paris, the Thames in England, Old Man River, which keeps rolling along in America, those all have their traditions. There has not been time yet for us to accumulate any traditions about the Parramatta; but such history as we have is largely composed of the doings of those who went to and fro upon it. One of the early traditions about the Parramatta is that one of our first Governors kissed his wife on getting out of a boat, thus giving to the place the name of Kissing Point.* — Broadcast from Station 2FC July 14 1935.

The problem with any such stories is that both Governor Phillip and Governor Bligh had left their respective wives in England, that Governor Hunter was a bachelor. As for the association with Governor Macquarie the name Kissing Point relating to the district was already in use some fifteen years before the Governor's arrival in New South Wales.

The accepted explanation, perhaps less interesting, certainly less romantic, is that it refers to the point in the Parramatta River where the depth of the water begins to reduce considerably. At this point sea-going vessels of the time would tend to *kiss* the riverbed in spots. Such *kissing* is a maritime term for *touching lightly*. Captain John Hunter (later Governor Hunter) applied the term. This explanation is recorded on a monument established in 1988 by the Ryde Municipal Council in Kissing Point Park.

### **A REMINDER TO CITIZENS AND AND THEIR CHILDREN**

These grounds available to the public are precious and to be cared for by all who visit. All visitors are asked to be especially careful not to drop any rubbish, especially bottles, cans or plastic bags in the area.

### **A VIEW OF PAST HISTORY**

Nearby, back in 1918, the last year of the Great War [1914-1918], some largish timber ships were built here at Kissing Point.



Above: A view of one of the 250ft long timber ships built from 1918 on the riverbank, now Kissing Point Park. These vessels were intended to be used during the Great War [1914-1918]. Being built of timber, theoretically to survive submarine attacks, they proved to be a failure and were destroyed at the end of hostilities. Below: From the bottom of Delange Road we look across Kissing Point Bay at a more complete timber vessel. — Photos by courtesy of the Ryde Historical Society.

### **A TINY GREENBELT PRESERVED**

Fortunately for present-day residents and visitors much of the waterfront here has been preserved. At one time, however a good strip of land between Waterview Street and the river, was due to be sold by auction to private purchasers. That was in February 1940. There were 21 waterfront blocks in Waterview Street varying in depth from 450 ft to 50 ft with frontages from 133 ft to 50 ft.

In the middle Yaralla Road was formed to allow public access to the river. Fortunately, the sale of the prime property was cancelled because of a covenant put on by the Walkers on the opposite bank, so that, happily, the area was preserved as parkland for the people.

There was, however, one encroachment on this area, namely the large boatshed built by the Halvorsens half a kilometre east of the Ryde Bridge. This name survives because it was Norwegian family Halvorsen brothers, sons of Norwegian Lars Halvorsen, who, in 1937, purchased five acres of waterfront land off Waterview Street. There they established a wharf, slipways and boatshed on the site of James Squire's brewery. Unfortunately appreciation of heritage was lacking at the time and the stone brewery there was demolished to make way for a sheet-metal shop.

With the advent of World War II in 1939 the lean times of the Depressions years were replaced by orders from the Australian Government for the building of ocean-going decked motor-boats for use in the Pacific. Over the wartime 147 *Halvorsen 38s* were delivered to the armed services, Australian, American and Dutch. Crash-boats were also produced for the Air Force. Larger vessels such as the *Halvorsen 62* and the 112 ft *Fairmile* submarine chaser were also supplied in great numbers.



Beyond the mangroves a view of the boatshed of the Concord Sailing Club  
and behind it Halvorsens' Boatshed. — Photo by author.

Some 350 men were employed during the war years. When peace came in 1945, the firm returned to building pleasure and commercial craft. In 1962 they launched the *Gretel I*, which was to perform well in international sailing events including the America Cup, which marked Australia's first entry.



### **MIND THOSE MUDDY MANGROVES**

For too long settlers and residents in the proximity despised the mangroves and proceeded to eradicate them. Since then, the tide of official thinking has turned, so that it is now an offence to destroy these useful plants. Mangroves abound in certain parts of the riverbank by Waterview Street, while across the waters around the Dame Eadith Walker Home and Brays Bay they continue to grow in profusion. All present mangroves on the foreshores of the Parramatta River are now to be zealously preserved. In 1892 oyster expert, Tim Wray, reported for the Fisheries Department that the only oysters that escape disease are those on the mangroves and 'cobbler's pegs'. Mangroves have been described as trees with tangled roots (the name may stem from *mangled groves*), but actually they are wondrous plants which have adapted themselves in a very ingenious way to live in saltwater. In order to survive they must secrete the salt or lose it through their leaves or roots.



Left to right: The fruit of the mangrove develops and then drops into the saltwater. It floats for a time, until it reaches a suitable shallow and fertile site. It puts down its roots and grows branches and leaves above the surface of the water. Once despised, mangroves are now appreciated as an essential part of the ecology.



Since respiration is very difficult in waterlogged or poorly aerated sand or soil, the mangroves develop aerial roots high up on their branches. These allow the trees to breathe and exude salt. You might notice that the roots travel for considerable distances horizontally in the mud and send up peg-like bodies known as Cobblers' Pegs. Spongy in texture, these pegs likewise breathe above the water at low tide and let out the salt.

Some mangroves have stilt roots, which arch up from the trunk and then arch down into the mud. These arches not only support the trees but also absorb extra oxygen at low tide. It is interesting to note that when a seed falls from the flower of the mangrove it normally drops like a spear to penetrate the mud where it will take root. If it fails to be buried, it will be eaten by shellfish.

### **ABORIGINES FIRST SIGHTING OF EUROPEANS AT KISSING POINT**



In January 1788, when the very first European surveying party was sighted at Kissing Point by the Wallumedegal natives, the latter called out in menacing tones *whalla whalla wai*, meaning something like *keep away from our hunting grounds*. They talked loudly with one another and brandished their spears.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT TWO OF THE EARLY HUMAN INHABITANTS



Time was when the Putney peninsula was a primeval forest inhabited by a tribe of original Australians known as Wallumedegal. The soil is a sandy loam with sandstone underneath, not as rich as the Wia soil further away from the rivers and creeks, yet highly productive for all manner of plants. The nearer the river, the closer the sandstone is to the surface. Trees grew in profusion there, the taller ones, unless by lightning or destroyed by fire, lived out their full life, perhaps centuries long, untouched by humans. Only the smaller ones might have been felled or bark stripped from big ones by the Aboriginals with their stone axe. Such bark was used for the covering of the natives' temporary *gunyahs* or *mia mias*, for canoes. The waters of the river, with plenty of fish and varied crustaceans, provided bountiful food for the earliest inhabitants.

When our Governor Phillip returned to England in 1792, he took a native named **BENNELONG** with him and showed him off to London society. There the native Australian was indulged, attending the theatre in Covent Garden, swimming at Sadler Wells, playing shuttlecock and learning boxing. Two outfits bought for him cost £30, the price of three years rent for a room in London. He is reported to have hated the colonists.

Three years later Bennelong returned to the Colony and went bush for a time, but felt alienated from his own people. Sadly, he ended up a victim of the evils of European culture. He became an outcast, a drunkard and died in a fight with other natives in January 1813.

Such was the tragic end of a man who was snatched from his people in order to establish friendly relations between blacks and whites, but who was ultimately shunned by both. Even his former wife would have nothing to do with him. As earlier mentioned, only one settler, an emancipated convict, James Scott, was known to have been friendly towards him and allowed him to stay on his farm at Kissing Point.

Bennelong's death was reported in the press: *Bennelong died on Sunday morning last at Kissing Point. Of this veteran champion of the native tribe little favorable can be said. For the last years he had been but little noticed. His propensity to drunkenness was inordinate, and when he was in that state, he was insolent, menacing and overbearing. In fact, he was a thorough savage not to be wasted from the form and character that nature gave him, by all the efforts that mankind could use.* — Sydney Gazette January 9 1813.

## **NANBAREE**

Just three months after the First Fleet arrived in 1788, Surgeon John White (after whom White Bay in Sydney Harbour is named) took under his wing a young Aboriginal named Nanbaree. His parents and sister had died from the smallpox which had raged horribly among the hapless indigenes. They were buried by Mr Squire (of Squire's beer fame) in his garden at Kissing Point.

The young boy grew up under the name of his protector, Andrew Sneap Hammond Douglass White. After Dr White's departure from the Colony in December 1804, Andrew White was employed by James Squire as a gamekeeper, until he voluntarily entered himself on board of *H.M.S. Reliance* under Captain Waterhouse (the man who had brought the first merino sheep from South Africa to the Colony and who bred them in Rydalmere). *He was much esteemed for his strict attention to the duties of seaman. Subsequently he went on a voyage in the Investigator with Captain Matthew Flinders, the crew of which ship were also much delighted with his orderly behaviour and uncommon alertness. On his return, however, he betook himself to his native wilds, which were mostly in the vicinity of Kissing Point. From the woods he only emerged for a number of years in order to return with renewed avidity and satisfaction.*

*Mr Squire, we have every reason to believe, treated him with particular tenderness and had recourse to many stratagems to rescue him from wretchedness; and with this view occasionally gave him amusing employment, but all unavailing — ancestral habits being too indelibly engendered ever to be eradicated by human effort, however trained in its benevolent design. He lies interred in the same grave as Bennelong and his wife [Nanbaree's friends] in Mr Squire's garden. When Nanbaree died, he was about 37 years old. \* Sydney Gazette Sept. 8 1821.*

## **LET US MAKE A SIDE TRACK**

We come to the river end of Douglas Street into which we turn to move into Douglas Park. We move up the slope to the end of Watson Street to sight a small monument to Bennelong and Nanbaree, who were befriended by landowner, James Squire, and buried in his garden to-day somewhere in a garden in Horden Avenue.

In the May 1968 issue of *Walkabout*, published by the Australian National Travel Association, there appeared an article on Bennelong referring to his burial place as being not specifically known. This prompted a reader to shed some light on the subject:

*Some 20 years ago I made a pilgrimage to the site of Bennelong's grave. My guide was Charles Cobham Watson [1866-1960, son of George Cobham Watson, after whom Watson Street is named], great grandson of James Squire, the First Fleeter who established his pioneer brewery at Kissing Point on the Parramatta River. Watson lived in a house\* which still stands on the site of the Squire orchard.*

*At that time, about 100 feet to the west of the house was a crumbling mound of bricks, which, according to Squire tradition, marked the grave of Bennelong. Now Squire's garden has been sub-divided, and the only mark of Bennelong's grave is the whirling arms of a clothes hoist in the backyard of a neat suburban home.*

*John Earnshaw, Lindfield*

That Watson house in the 1950s, was perhaps an old timber structure which for many years became the residence of Eric Hopping and family who operated a dairy on an acre or so of land fronting Watson Street next to Cleves Park. The dwelling was shaded by a large palm tree at the back and a camphorlaurel at the front.



We retrace our steps towards the riverbank to **Bennelong Park**: This reserve by the waterfront is dedicated to the memory of Aboriginal, Bennelong, who was befriended by Governor Phillip, who was taken to England and who died on the property of James Squire, the farmer and brewer who, in the early 19th century, owned all of present Putney.



On this reserve just outside former Halvorsens boatshed, at the moment of writing, a mixture of private marine businesses, there is a monument placed there by the Ryde Council celebrating the Bi-Centenary 1788-1988.

#### SQUIRES BREWERY

BY 1798 JAMES SQUIRE BECAME THE LICENSEE OF THE MALTING SHOVEL TAVERN, A HALFWAY HOUSE FOR TRAVELLERS BETWEEN SYDNEY AND PARRAMATTA. IN THIS AREA HE ESTABLISHED A COMMERCIAL BREWERY (REPUTED TO BE THE FIRST) AND GREW THE FIRST HOPS.



Squire's home and brewery by the river. At one time Squire owned all of present Putney and Tennyson. Was his beer popular? The quality of his brew was perhaps questioned by the following epitaph on a tombstone in Parramatta Cemetery:

*We who wish to lie here, drink Squire's beer.*

Toward the western end of the parkland near the bottom of Regent Street there is another plaque relating to the history of the area:

THIS IS THE SITE OF THE FIRST SETTLEMENT ON JANUARY 10 1792 WILLIAM CARELESS AND JAMES WEAVERS IN THE LOCALITY SET UP BY GOVERNOR PHILLIP AS FARMS OF THE EASTERN BOUNDARY (LATER KISSING POINT WHERE ROSE OUR FIRST CHURCH AND SCHOOL IN 1802. SLIGHTLY EASTWARD WERE SQUIRE'S FARM, BREWERY AND WHARF AND BENNELONG'S GRAVE. WESTWARD WERE SQUIRE'S INN AND OLD RYDE WHARF AS WELL AS SHEPHERD'S "THORN FARM" AND "HELLENIE" WITH THEIR NOTED ORANGERY AND VINEYARDS. THIS TABLET COMMEMORATES OUR PIONEERS, "DECENT, SOBER, INDUSTRIOUS MEN", WHO, LIKE OUR ABORIGINAL WALLUMEDEGAL, WERE THE MOST BIGOTED RACE OF PEOPLE TO THE GROUND IN WHICH THEY DWELT.

CAN WE BE OTHERWISE?

E.L.S.HALL, MAYOR RYDE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL 1948.



At this point, in sight of the Ryde Bridges, despite the interest aroused, all are a bit weary, so it's about turn to head back to school and think about all that has been learned. The next day the teachers will follow up with reports on the excursion and announcement of the next one down to Putney Park.

### *Good Old Putney*

*Hurrah for good old Putney! To you I sing this song.*

*Your modesty delights me. I love you right or wrong.*

*Oh, take me back to Putney, to pals of long ago!*

*Take me to the river to haunts I used to know!*

*I dream of tranquil waters, of fishing by the Bay,*

*Of ferry boats and dinghies — all joys of yesterday.*

*Now, seek not any glamour that everywhere seems rife:*

*Just be the same as ever and stay that way for life!*

Author

#### **ZEALOUSLY WATCHING THEIR Ps AND Qs**

The number of streets in the area under study, the names of which begin with the letter **P** like Putney itself, recall an old story of the late 1920s. It was a hot Saturday in summer when a group of four bachelors from Putney piled into a Ford Tourer and cheerily headed for the Blue Mountains.

They were all partial to a drink of beer, but wisely decided that they would limit their stops en route to regale themselves. Being from Putney and proud of it, they planned to stop only at places that began with **P**.

So they had their first drink at **Parramatta** and then at **Penrith**. Thereafter they kept to their plan, stopping at **Plaxland**, **Pawson**, **Pentworth Falls**, **Patoomba**, **Plackheath** and **Pount Victoria**.

Well, dear readers, that is the end of our tales out of school, with the exception of one concerning an event that I actually experienced in school, though not in the Ryde area. I make bold to thrust it upon you, endeavouring to show that it, as well as all the aforementioned tales, might happen at any time, anywhere in any district, thus confirming the point made at the beginning of the *Tales* that there is a certain universality about schools to which we can all relate. Well, here is my tale, for what it is worth:

#### **THE ART OF COMMUNICATION ?**

At a staff meeting on the last day of term, long after the scholars had enthusiastically taken leave of their seat of learning, the school Principal was addressing at length the not so enthusiastic members of the teaching staff. He had been laying down the law, ranting and raving seemingly without end.

Inevitably, most countered the tirades of abuse from their unpopular and unreasonable superior by switching off mentally and dreaming of their own plans, a technique well known to every school pupil whose attention is not fully captivated by their teacher. The Deputy Principal, who was a top bloke, yet not sympathetic to the Principal, enjoyed an even greater advantage by turning down his hearing aid to zero. Finally, probably through exhaustion after his marathon speech of abuse, the Principal suddenly turned to his co-hort, the Deputy Principal, seeking to enlist his support with the words, "And what do you think, Mr Deputy Principal?"

The second-in-charge, though mentally asleep, was immediately awake to his predicament. He slowly rose to his feet with one hand moving significantly inside his coat to his chest, and, although he was on the air once again, his mind was working overtime to find something to say which could successfully compensate for his 100 per cent inattention.

He could produce but one drawn out sound, "Hmm...mm". Everyone present understood the situation lightning fast. The Principal, highly embarrassed, understood the principle of the happening and hopefully, of course, learned a lesson on how not to communicate. The rest of the staff had to keep a straight face for a while, but had a great chuckle about it afterwards.

#### JUST CHILD-LIKE

*Oh, Miss, if you want to buy a German Shepherd dog, we have one for sale.*

*It will eat anything and is very fond of children.*

*Why did the parrot wear a raincoat? So he could be polyunsaturated?*

So now it's time again to sing the children's time-honoured chant on the last day of school:



*One more day and we will be out of the gates of misery.*

*No more pencils, no more books; no more teachers' ugly looks.*

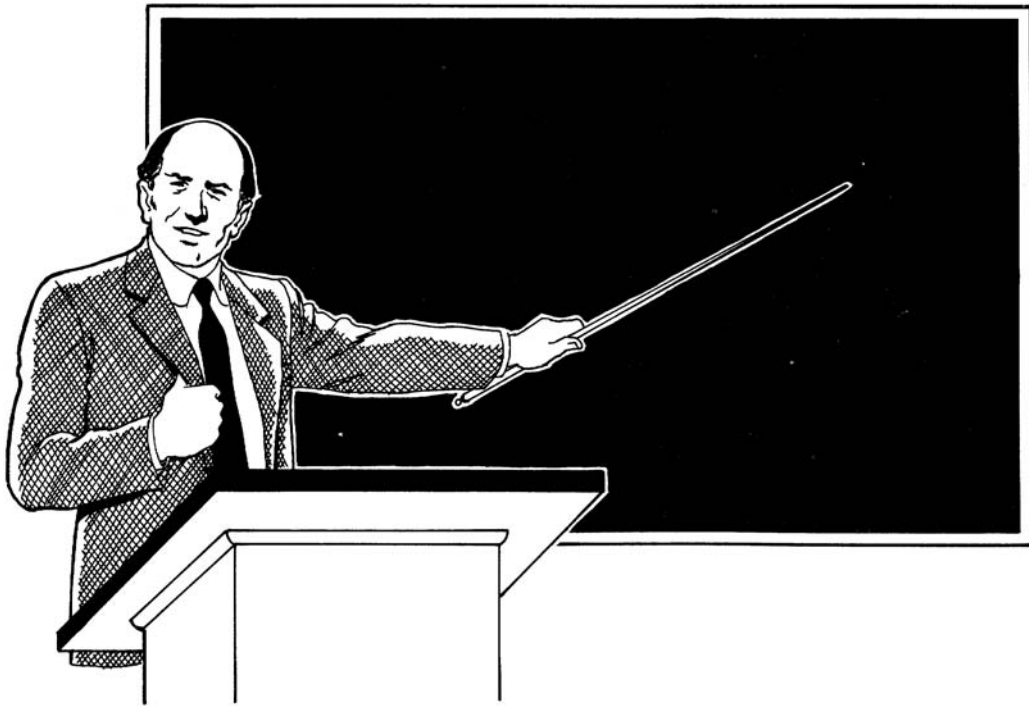
*No more Latin, no more French;  
no more sitting on a hard board bench.*

**Meanwhile:**



*No more kiddies, no more wails,  
That's the end of all my tales.*

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**THERE IS NO MORE FOR TO\_DAY.**

**HAPPY HOLIDAY!**

**HOWEVER,**

**GOOD OLD PUTNEY SCHOOL**

**WILL RE-OPEN IN THE NEW YEAR**

**READY TO WELCOME ALL PUPILS.**



## SCHOOLDAYS: THE BEST TIME OF YOUR LIFE ?

There is only one thing permanent in life — change. In my life of eight and a half decades I have seen many changes, changes of all kinds. We all vary in our knowledge and talents, but one thing is certain: we never stop learning. I freely omit that I have never learned to *type right*. I have toiled typing this work with but two fingers, while my young ten-year-old neighbour, already an expert on the computer, has helped me technically when I was in need.

