



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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1/46 Oatley Ave. ,
OATLEY. 2223.

May 1978.

Dear Friend and Member,

The regular meeting will be held as follows:

- Date: Friday Evening, May 19th, 1978, at 8.00 p.m.
- Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Business: General.
- Syllabus Item: Peter Sage presents: "Tasmania Revisited".
Come early, you are sure to enjoy this evening.
- Supper Roster: Captain: Mrs. N. Lee, & Mesdames Ronson, Samuelson,
H. Turner, Jones, McLeod, and Dunsmore.

Ladies please bring a plate.

Mr. A. Ellis,
President.
Phone 587.1159

Mrs. E. Wright,
Treas. & Soc. Sec.
Phone 599.4884

Mrs. B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer.
Phone 587.9164

Miss A. Lang,
Secretary.
Phone: 57.2608

Mr. A. Ellis,
Research Officer.
Phone 587.1159

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

.... Francis Gay.
(The Friendship Book)
1978.

Many of our Members have been, and still are, ill. We are sorry to hear this and trust that you will all be well again soon.

SOCIAL.

PORT MACQUARIE. For your pleasure, Mrs. Wright (Social Secretary) has arranged a Coach Trip to Port Macquarie, with a visit to Timber Town at Wauchope, and also to South West Rocks & Trial Bay. This should be most enjoyable.

..... Waiting List Only.

The Details are as follows:

Time: 7.30 a.m. sharp.
Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.
Cost: \$65.00 per person (Inclusive - Dinner, Bed & Breakfast)
Date: Saturday September 30th, October 1st and 2nd.

A Bus Trip to WOLLOMBI, with Morning Tea stop at Peats Ridge, Lunch at Cessnock, has been arranged by Mrs. Wright (Social Secretary) for your pleasure, details as follows:

Time: 7.30 A.M. SHARP.
Meeting Place: Town Hall, Rockdale.
Cost: Per Person: \$4.50.
Date: Saturday, May 25th, 1978.

There has been a wonderful response to the outings, which really makes our Social Secretary, Mrs. Wright, very happy, and makes her efforts worthwhile. She is deeply appreciative of your co-operation. At the time of writing, there is only a waiting list. However, if you are interested, ring Mrs. Wright, 599.4884, there could be a cancellation. This does happen.

All monies to be paid at May Meeting please.

Books numbered 1 to 6 should soon be available again at a reasonable price. Also available (by the same Author - the late Gifford Eardley) - Book 7. "The Early History/Tempe & the Black Creek Valley".

Contact Asst. Secretary 'Phone 59.8078,
OR Miss Otton 'Phone 59 4259 (after 8 p.m.)

Society Badges are available - \$1.00 each. (See Mrs. Wright).

Miss Otton, Curator of 'Lydham Hall', is in need of Ladies and/or Gentlemen to assist with the weekend roster. Visitors come from far and wide to see this lovely old Home, and your presence would greatly facilitate the inspections. Ring Miss Otton, Phone 59.4259, your call will be appreciated.

There is now a large glass display case upstairs in Lydham Hall. At present it contains a few souvenirs from the various wars. Can you help to enlarge this display by exhibiting some of the war relics which you might have? These will be greatly appreciated, and good care taken of any souvenirs which you might care to loan or perhaps donate. Ring Miss Otton 59.4259.

DONATED TO LYDHAM HALL.

Mrs. H. Hauville & Mrs. O. Went, Hand-made net patchwork bedspread 1896.
Bexley. Nightdress case, in drawn thread & hairpin
lace edge, and 2 watch pockets.

Mrs. McCloure, Beautiful Ornament, over 100 years old.
Hurstville.

Mrs. Fuller, 6 white cotton and lace nightdresses.
Kingsgrove. 1 white apron, embroidered in Red Cotton
1 silk bed jacket and 1 night cap.
2 fox fur necklets.
Collection of hat pins.

Mrs. Cullen, Small blue and white meat dish
Bexley.

Mrs. E. V. Williams, 2 blue and red and cream ornaments.
Bexley. 2 blue and white dinner plates. Delph China.

On Loan.
Mrs. Morris, 2 pictures, early cricketers of this district.
Arncliffe.

ARNCLIFFE PUBLIC SCHOOL - 1861 to 1940.

An historical account prepared by the Division of Research and Planning, N.S.W. Dept. of Education, from records held in the Mitchell Library, Government Archives and the Dept. of Education.

- September 1961.

Events of great significance took place in the history of N.S.W. between the years 1800 and 1860. It was during those six decades that the transportation of convicts ceased, thereby permitting the development of a colony of free men. Legislation systematized squatting on the large tracts opened up and more efficient communication was promoted by the introduction of stage coach lines and by the railways. An even more important event was the discovery of gold in large quantities resulting in a trebling of the population between 1851 and 1861. The rapid economic expansion which followed, promoted the growth of the Stock Exchange. At the same time those seeking a higher education no longer were forced to undertake the arduous and often dangerous journey to the British Isles, since in 1850 a University was founded at Sydney. Furthermore, improved communication with lands beyond this continent was assured by the establishment of a steam postal service to Britain. Politically, the colony advanced as a result of the introduction of responsible government and the separation of Victoria and Queensland from N.S.W.

In contrast, in spite of the active assistance of energetic governors like Macquarie, progress in education was slow and uncertain. The retardation of growth was due to several important factors; but, it would probably be correct to maintain that the great dispersion of population in N.S.W, the inadequacy of communication, the very small education vote, and not least, the sectarian rivalry contributed the major reasons for the slow expansion of public education. In addition, the colonial mind was agitated by the question of the extension of the right to vote and the vital problem of land ownership in the early nineteenth century. It must not be forgotten, too, that the strenuous business of pioneering a new land permitted little opportunity to think about and work for an adequate education for all.

Early governors such as Bourke and Gipps soon realized that the scheme most suited to a thinly scattered population of mixed religious persuasions was that based on the principle of united secular but separate religious instruction; that is, a system designed to embrace all classes and all sects. But it was not until almost the middle of the century, in 1848, that the Governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy, a former member of the House of Commons and a staff officer in the Duke of Wellington's army, established public education on a firmer base by instituting the Board of National Education. Initially, the Board

consisted of three members. Its Chairman was John Hubert Plunkett, the Attorney General of N.S.W; the other two members being Sir Charles Nicholson, physician, squatter and speaker of the Legislative Council and William Sharpe Macleay, a graduate of Cambridge University and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Mr Macleay soon resigned, but the others, enthusiasts in their belief in public education, persisted, and as a result faced bitter opposition especially from the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

A similarly constituted Denominational Board of four members, composed of the representatives of various religious bodies, was appointed. In general their duties ended when they distributed the funds granted to them by the Legislature. This Board exercised little effective voice in the appointment and the dismissal of teachers. In effect the parish clergymen almost completely controlled the Denominational Schools.

The scheme proposed by Lord Stanley for Ireland in 1831 was adopted by the Board of National Education except for minor modifications designed to suit the special conditions in N.S.W. The essential feature of these Irish Schools was the attempt to bring together children of all sects for a general literary education which, while Christian in spirit, was undenominational.

The promotion of such a scheme of education in N.S.W. was hampered by the very inadequate and not always reliable education vote. The Board, however, was prepared to provide up to two-thirds of the cost of erecting and fitting out a school, whenever an attendance of thirty pupils could be guaranteed and local patrons found to undertake the responsibility of raising the balance of the money, superintending the erection of the school and taking a share in its conduct. The appointment of teachers was to rest solely with the Commissioners, but they would pay special regard to the recommendations of the patrons.

In their reports, the Commissioners of the Board of National Education affirmed their belief in the central position of the teacher in any system of education; in fact, "*the teacher is the school*". The teacher, they believed:

"... should be a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper and discretion, should be imbued with the 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 mind of youth, and of giving a useful direction to the power which education confers."

The teacher derived his income from two sources; there was first a salary paid by the Board ranging in country districts from 60.0.0 pounds to 144.0.0 pounds p.a. and secondly, the local contributions in the shape of school fees, together with a residence. The average amount of salary received by teachers was 92.8.8 pounds and of school fees 52.19.0 pounds, making a total of 145.7.8 pounds. The amount paid by each family for school fees was small and generally

"bore no reasonable proportion to the means of most parents". But as the Commissioners of the Board of National Education complained:

".. Frequently the scanty pittance obtained from the people is paid grudgingly, even when earned by heavy labor; advantage is taken of the teacher's necessity to compel him to pay an exorbitant price for every article of consumption, and he has to abide the risk of offending the prejudices or irritating the self-esteem of his neighbours".

These "National" schools were under the control of local bodies, known as Boards of Local Patrons, who exercised wide powers and assumed important responsibilities in school matters. For example, they were expected to provide for the repair of the school and premises, to ensure regular attendance of pupils, to protect the teacher from *"frivolous and vexatious complaints"* and to treat the teacher in such a way as *"to second his efforts for the improvement of the children"*.

Both the Local Patrons and teachers were hampered in their efforts to promote education in some districts in N.S.W. by the apathy of many residents, which is graphically described in the Reports of the Commissioners of the Board of National Education:

".. The localities are not a few in number in which, if the people declared their real sentiments, they would express themselves in this manner:-

We are not particularly desirous to obtain education for our children, inasmuch as they are very useful to us at home; but should the Board establish a school, erect buildings and appoint teachers without trouble or expense to us, then to oblige the Commissioners we shall have no objection to sending them to school when they can be spared."

Sometimes:

".. Certain subjects are interdicted by some parents, and particular methods by others. As a rule, parents in country districts consider that by attending school for two or three years, in the usual irregular manner, the children ought to have acquired all necessary information and to have become well educated; and should the unreasonable expectation be disappointed, they at once attribute the failure to the teacher's incapacity".

Since the Local Patrons, not the Commissioners, were required to initiate the establishment of a school, this general want of concern for the education of their children was especially serious. Fortunately, there were always some public spirited people willing to undertake the responsibility for education in their district and sometime between September and November 1861 (for no date appears on the form), "*an application for the establishment of a non-vested National School at Arncliffe, Post Town - Cook's River. Parish - St. George. Police District - Canterbury*", was lodged with the Commissioners. The three Local Patrons had managed to secure a well floored room of slab measuring 24' x 10' in which to educate the 28 children expected to attend. School furniture and material were meagre; there were only four forms and no apparatus. The proposed first teacher was Mr. George Turner, aged 28 years, from Hexham, Essex, England. For two years he had taught Sunday School at Arncliffe under the direction of the Rev. S.C.Kent. To assist the teacher was his 19 year old wife Mary, who hailed from Devonshire, England.

The school opened in November 1861, with an initial enrolment of 30 pupils, but soon the attendance fell below the accepted average. Consequently, the Commissioners informed the Local Patrons that aid would be withdrawn unless the attendance increased. The Secretary, Mr Kirby, replied that the residents intended doubling the size of the room since land was being taken up by new settlers in the neighbourhood. There is no evidence to indicate that the room was enlarged or that the attendance improved. By December 1862 a new teacher, Mr Young, had taken control of the school and his predecessor, as was customary, had drawn up an inventory of books and materials contained in the school. There is a list of this equipment, which gives some glimpse of what might be found in an Australian school a century ago.

'Inventory (28th November, 1862).

First Book of lessons	1
Second " " "	24
Third " " "	12
Fourth " " "	1
Sequel to Fourth Book	1
Fifth Book for Boys	1
Reading Book for Girls	1
English Grammar	1
First Book of Arithmetic	12
Scripture Lessons. Old Testament No.1.	20
Scripture Lessons. " " No.2.	10
Scripture Lessons. New " No.1.	16
Scripture Lessons. " " No.2	10
Lessons on the Truth of Christianity	2
Introduction to Geography	1
Spelling Book	1
English Dictionary	1
Set of Registers	1

Map of World	1
Map of Australia	1
Notice to Visitors	2
Table of Minimum Attainments	2
Set of Copy Texts	1
The Board's Statement	1

Sgd. George Turner - Joseph Coles Kirby."

The school remained open only a few weeks longer and in January 1863 it was closed.

It was during the period 1859-62 that the government in N.S.W. was too preoccupied with the urgent and fundamental problems of land and constitutional reform to concern itself with the difficulties of providing education in such a thinly populated colony. In January 1866, James Martin formed a coalition government with Henry Parkes. On fiscal policy Martin and Parkes were in disagreement, but they agreed to leave mutually contentious legislation alone. Instead they concentrated on the removal of social evils.

Perhaps the greatest reform was the Act to make better provision for public education. Under the Public Schools Act of 1866, of which Parkes was the chief architect, the National and Denominational Boards were abolished and in their place one controlling body, the Council of Education, was established, directed by five members. This Council assumed control of public education in N.S.W. on 1st January 1867.

It was to this newly constituted Council of Education that Mr. G King on behalf of the residents despatched an "Application for the Establishment of a Public School at Arncliffe Post Town St. Peter's, Cook's River" dated 21st November 1867. Several interesting details were included in the application form. For example, the proposed new school was alleged to be situated "beyond Cook's River Dam". Three schools, St. Peter's, Cook's River and Marrickville were within two miles of its site and in addition "there is a dame's school at Tempe under the Wesleyan Church". This school was not considered to be well attended, though 20 children were taught there. The Local Patrons at Arncliffe had acquired the use of a room in a stone building measuring 20' x 14'. One wall was of slab and the room was considered capable of accommodating 35 children. For furniture, church seats were available. Evidently there were sufficient children in the district since a list of 50 names were appended.

It was nearly four month's later, on 4th March 1868, that Mr. Inspector Huffer issued a report to the Council of Education"

".. Arncliffe is a village situated between the Cook's and George's Rivers, about half a mile from the south end of the Cook's River Dam to the right of the main road. The residents in the locality number about 250 and are chiefly occupied in the cultivation of small farms and market gardens".

The Inspector added that there were about 50 children of school age in the district and the other schools were situated on the opposite side of the river. The proposed school building, which was also used as a place of worship, had a floor of cement and was unfenced. Mr Inspector Huffer declared that the building was not suitable for a school, but a school was needed. Consequently he recommended that a school be opened provisionally and that steps be taken to procure a proper school. Probably because of lack of accommodation it was recommended also that an unmarried man be sent first.

In June 1868 Rev. S King requested that a teacher be sent to re-open the school and he recommended Mr Mills. Late in June or early in July Mr John Mills entered on duty.

The Council in June 1869, issued the Arncliffe School with:

"Slate pencils	- 2 boxes	- 1/6
Pencil cases	- 2 dozen	- 8d.
Pens	- 1 box	- 2/-
School Clock	- 1	-2.0.0
Chalk	- 1 box	- 2/6
Map of Europe	- 1	- 15/- "

Carriage by 'bus from the Government Store cost 6d. The next year Mr Mills received a Fees Book in which to record the amount of school fees received from the pupils.

The residents requested building aid in April 1870, but the Council's funds were so inadequate that only one third assistance could be guarantted. A month later Mr Inspector Huffer reported on the proposed school site:

" .. The piece of land offered by Mr Hasman as a site for a school at Arncliffe consists of one acre of unimproved land situated about 200 yards to the north of the building now in temporary use as a school house."

The Inspector estimated the value of the land at about 10.0.0 pounds. Nothing apparently was done to secure the site to build a suitable school.

By 1870 the school enrolments reached their peack of 50; the next year there was a fall to 41. This decline in enrolments was most likely due to the fact that there was no proper school building or interested body of local residents.

Mr. Inspector Huffer recommended that a local body be constituted and in November 1871 a Board of Local Patrons was instituted. The members were:

Mr William Yates (Gentleman) Mayor of West Botany.
Mr William Wentworth Bucknell (Gentleman).

Mr Thomas Woolacott (Gardener)
Mr John McInnes (Hotel Keeper).

In spite of the establishment of a local board the enrolments declined in 1872 to 37. However, in September, Mr Mills received 24 Australian Class Books No.1, Part 1 and 24 A.C. Books No.1, Part 2, which had been despatched *"by omnibus to Mr McInnes' Hotel, Arncliffe"*.

Probably the teacher could see the school slowly declining until there would not be a reasonable living for him. Consequently in October Mr Mills requested the Council to grant him control of the Woodstock Public School at Jamberoo. This request was declined and two months later he informed the Council *"of the ruinous state and great inconvenience of the present school"* which was alleged to be difficult to maintain *"on account of the small number of children within reach of the school"*.

The recently constituted Board was evidently anxious to proceed with building since an acre of land had been conveyed to the Council. It was difficult, of course, to raise the one-third amount and the Government would not grant more money for education in 1872. In January 1873 the Council threatened to withdraw aid in consequence of the unsuitability of the premises. Later in 1873 the school was closed though no exact date is indicated in the relevant records.

Mr William Yates, who was Mayor of West Botany when the Board of Local Patrons was established in 1871, informed the Council in May 1874 that the local board had resigned when the school closed. He claimed that the master was withdrawn without intimation to the local board and asked if it were their intention to reopen the school. Mr Yates concluded by declaring that there were 36 pupils on the roll at the time of closure.

An application for the reopening of the Public School at Arncliffe was made at the end of 1877 by 21 parents (three of whom had to make a mark, being unable to sign their names). Messrs Johnson and Bridges, Inspectors, reported:

".. The district is inhabited by market gardeners and is likely to be permanently settled. About 114 children will probably attend the proposed school, and the average attendance will be about 75. There is a school site belonging to the Council of Education, but it is not centrally situated. There is land belonging to Mr Terry in the vicinity of Cobbler's Pinch, near the junction of the Forest and Rocky Point Roads. As the present application emanates solely from the residents of Arncliffe, one of the two wards of the Municipality of West Botany, and it is not necessary or desirable to establish two schools within the Municipality, we have

suggested a public meeting of the residents of both wards with a view to decide upon the most eligible site".

This public meeting was held in January 1878, and it was then decided (with only one dissentient) to recommend the acceptance of the offer by Mr J H Terry, M.L.A., of 2 acres at a price of 400.0.0 pounds. This was considered the best and most central site available. After delays due to legal difficulties about the title, the purchase was completed in September. This was the portion of the present site facing Princes Highway (or Rocky Point Road, as it was then known) on the east side of the Highway.

Meanwhile the local School Board of Tempe Public School had protested against the establishment of a school at West Botany on the ground that it would attract many children then attending Tempe school.

" .. About 40 children (one third of the school) come from the other side of the Dam (or West Botany). If a school is established there, the inference is that a great portion, or the whole, of that number will attend it".

Mr Inspector McCredie reported:

".. The distance between Tempe and Kogarah Public Schools is about 5 miles, and another Public School is needed to fill the gap between them. The school that would be seriously injured would be the Rocky Point Wesleyan School, and not the Public School at Tempe. Many who now send their children to Rocky Point Wesleyan would have signed the application, but from regard to the Teacher. He is highly respected, though not considered an efficient teacher beyond a certain point. I am inclined to think that the Wesleyan School would soon be closed after the opening of the school now asked for. It appears to me that Tempe has a sufficient field for itself irrespective of West Botany".

He recommended that a school should be established at West Botany, and this was accepted.

The next step was to provide a building. It was then decided to erect a stone building capable of holding 135 children, and a teacher's residence of 4 rooms with kitchen. The expenditure involved, though too great for the present state of the locality, was considered to be justified by its future prospects. Plans were prepared, and in August 1879 a tender of 2,139.0.0 pounds by William Eaton and Son (the lowest of sixteen received) was accepted. The work was completed in June 1880. The school and residence were separate buildings, not under the same roof. Mr W. T Bateson was then appointed Teacher, and he opened the school on 12th July.

(to be contd.)