



SCRAP ALBUM

Presented by J O H class Teacher - Mrs J Ringland



AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST

In the 150 years of its history, Christ Church School (now known as Newcastle East Public School) has developed with Newcastle almost since its beginnings if we ignore the 12 years between 1804 (the permanent settlement) and the start of education in the little township.

The school, in various buildings, but in the same part of the city, has shared with Newcastle its good times and bad.

It was doing its job of education in the hard, tough days of the convict system, when most of the pupils were the children of convicts.

City school
looks back
on 150 years

By Bill Blanch

It shared in the excitement of the gold rush days and it survived — sometimes precariously — the bad times of the shipping and coal industries.

Those people who take part in the celebrations next month and who try to cast their minds back over the 150 years, with their many changes, may reflect that the most unchanging thing about a school is the children.

In its early days, the school was near the flogging triangles where convicts, including the schoolchildren's parents, were often scourged for breaches of the regulations.

The children of those days undoubtedly accepted these public punishments as part of the pattern of life.

A later generation of school pupils was to see the law operating in a different way, but still with punishment as the end result.

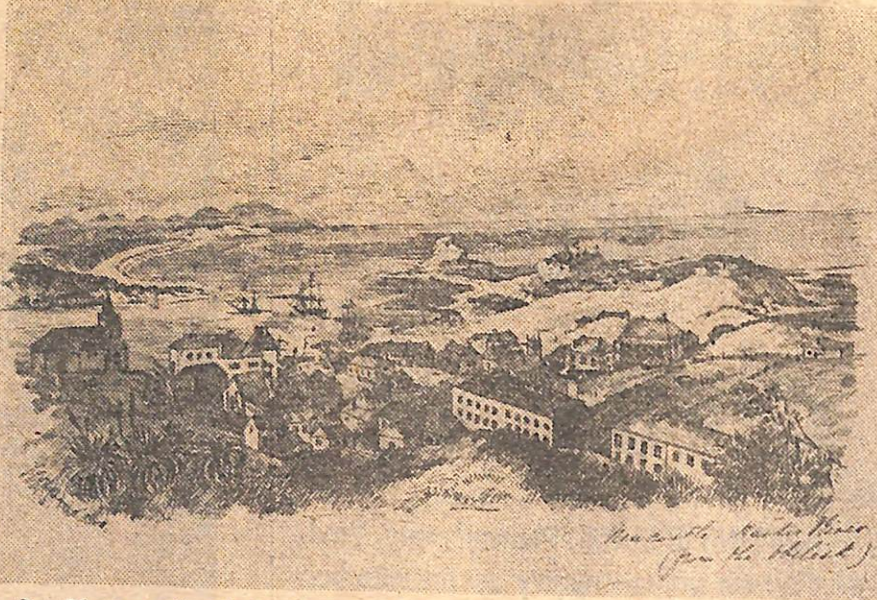
Newcastle Courthouse, at the top of Bolton St., just across from the school, was opened in 1890, and it was the custom for the police to march the prisoners handcuffed together up Bolton St. to the courthouse.

If the parade took place outside school hours, crowds of children would be seen tagging along behind the prisoners, making rude remarks to them and to their police escorts.

SPECTACLE

The children probably enjoyed themselves, but the school teachers and a number of other citizens regarded this as a most unedifying sight.

Complaints were made to the Government of the day, and the result was that the police took the prisoners to the court in a covered wagon



● Photograph of the Harriet Scott sketch, now in the Dixon Library, Sydney (Public Library of NSW), showing the settlement of Newcastle about 1853. On the left is Christ Church, where the school, now known as Newcastle East Public School, was conducted for some years.

The history of the school will be told in a special souvenir booklet, which is being prepared by Mr. E. J. Braggett, lecturer in education at Newcastle Teachers' College and Newcastle University.

Mr. Braggett, who is 28, was educated at Newcastle Boys' High School, Newcastle University College, and Sydney University, was awarded a Rotary Foundation fellowship in 1962-63 to study in Scandinavia.

Over the past 18 months he estimates he has spent almost 1000 hours in research into the history of the Newcastle East School. This article is based on that research.

Early records show that the school now known as Newcastle East School was in existence on May 5, 1816, when it was attended by 17 children aged between three and 13 years, who were taught by Henry Wrensford.

Wrensford had been sentenced in England in 1812 to seven years' transportation for fraud and he arrived in NSW in 1813.

Mr. Braggett's research shows that the only building which could have been used for the school was a slab hut in the vicinity of Watt St., between the courthouse and the river.

ELEGANT

The school was in this building for at least two years.

Newcastle's population in 1816 was about 400, mostly convicts, but in 1817 it had risen to 540, and by 1820 it was over 1000.

In August, 1818, the school was transferred to the vestry of Christ Church, which had been built by the Commandant, Captain James Wallis, and has been described as "a very handsome church with an elegant spire."

This was the first church in Newcastle.

The school was mostly for the children of convicts, but the children of some free settlers also attended, as well as some children of the members of the civil establishment.

When Wrensford returned to Sydney in 1820, now a free man, the authorities sent another convict, Samuel Dell, to take charge of the school.

Dell had been transported to NSW for 14 years for having had forged banknotes in his possession. He had been

acquitted on a charge of forgery.

There were 33 pupils on the roll when Dell took over. He remained at the school until 1828 and during that time it continued to be conducted in the vestry.

DIFFICULT

Some time after 1829—the exact date is not certain—the vestry became too small for the number of pupils attending, and the school was shifted to a building on the present school site in Bolton St.

This was during the early years of the 1830's.

From its commencement in 1816 until 1826, the school had been controlled by the Government, but then, in a climate of close liaison between the Government and the Church of England, the school was taken over by the church and was run as a denominational school.

During the time it was a church school it was situated on a small block of land on the corner of Bolton and Church Sts., opposite the present courthouse.

The long, narrow classroom measuring 35ft. by 16ft. — made it difficult for pupil teachers, who were 14 or a little older, to make themselves heard by children at the back of the class.

The school roll shows the change brought when many of the convicts were moved to Port Macquarie in 1823.

The population of Newcastle dropped to 200 and the school attendance to about 15.

GOLD RUSH

Over the years, the numbers at the school varied a great deal, reflecting such events as the gold rush, which caused many family men to run off "to make their fortunes."

In the 1860's the numbers at the school rose significantly and eventually reached 160, which was about the limit of the accommodation.

The rolls show that after 1860 a few children came from as far away as Wickham, their parents apparently desiring them to have a church school education.

Some of the ups and downs of the school were due to the industrial and economic troubles of the mining and shipping concerns.

When the purse grew lean, parents could not afford the weekly school fee of sixpence.

Even when the fee was reduced to threepence after 1880 there were still some parents who could not afford to pay.

Because the Bolton St. School was a Church of England school, some parents in Newcastle wanted a public school to be opened. This occurred in 1859, and the new public school was in the basement of the Brown St. Congregational Church.

NEW SCHOOL

This school was destined to have a great future. Four years later it moved to Tyrrell St., to a site now occupied by the Hunter District Water Board's reservoir.

Then, in 1878, it moved across the road to a new school building. After 1890, this primary school became a Superior Public School, where the teaching was on a higher standard than in an ordinary public school.

In 1906, this school in Tyrrell St. became Newcastle High School, a co-educational school that was eventually to branch out into the suburbs as separate high schools for boys and girls.

The old building is now Newcastle Boys' Junior High School.

The success of the public school on The Hill was of great significance to Newcastle East Public School, which reverted to State Government control in 1883.

Newcastle East could not become a superior public school—the extra costs prevented this—but it did become a flourishing school and more land had to be acquired for the enlargement of the school building.

The first headmaster of the Newcastle East School when it came under State Government control in January, 1883, was Edward Byrne and he was in charge until 1894.

By 1888 enrolments had reached 324 and another new classroom had to be built. It cost just under £100.

In the late 1880's and the early 1890's, a series of strikes caused much hardship to families and the school authorities had to cancel school fees in many cases.

In the early years of the present century, enrolments began to climb steadily and, as accommodation was unsatisfactory, it was decided to erect a new building.

PRESSURE

A two-storey brick building containing four classrooms was completed by the contractor, Mr. E. H. Banks, in June, 1909, at a cost of £3690.

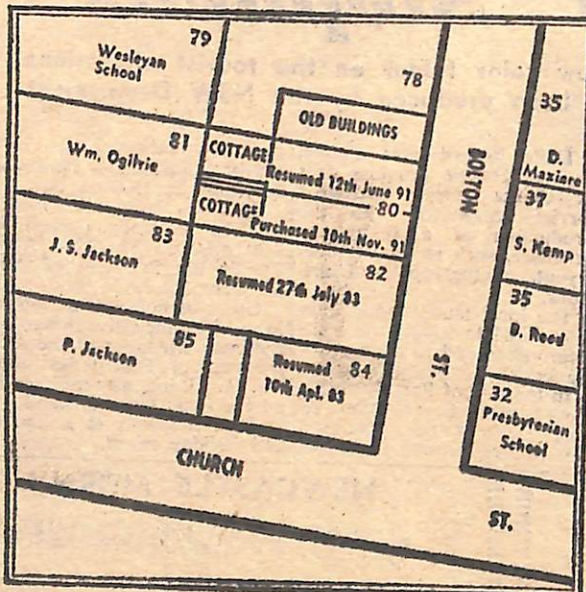
The pressure on accommodation continued, especially with the closing of the Superior Public School on The Hill after the High School commenced.

Three more classrooms were built at Newcastle East school in 1911-1912 at a cost of £1980, the contractors being W. F. Gazzard and Son.

KEPT PACE

Now, 150 years after its establishment, Newcastle East Public School, which kept pace with the growth of the city for so many years, finds that families are moving away from the East End into the suburbs.

But the school is still performing its important educational role, in the dual capacity of a public school and a specialist school, catering, among others, for deaf children and children with speech difficulties.



● Locality plan showing the acquisition of land for the building of the school.

Laugh-a-day will appear on Monday

● **SCHOOL'S 150th BIRTHDAY**
Funds drive for anniversary book



● *The President of Newcastle East School's Mothers' Club, Mrs. Marie Smith and Miss Helen Bros prepare to post 1000 letters seeking donations towards the school's historical booklet, which is part of the 150th anniversary celebrations in May.*

The booklet, now being prepared by local historian, Mr. E. Braggett, of the Newcastle Teachers' College, will cost about £250 to print.

Newcastle East P and C Association is organising the celebrations, which will begin with a combined service at Christ Church Cathedral on Monday, May 9.

Highlights of the celebrations will be the official commemoration on the afternoon of May 10 and a public dinner at night at Winn's. People wanting to attend the dinner should get in touch with the school.

The Principal of the School, Mr. M. Hall, is delighted with the high standard of work sent from schools throughout the world for the international exhibition of schoolwork.

It is proposed to invite representatives from other schools to visit this exhibition on May 11.

DOCUMENTS

Mr. Hall is anxious to receive old documents, books and photos which could be used in the school's History Corner exhibition.

Already he has collected photostats of a number of historical documents, including a petition of 1881 to the then Government, asking that the Government take over control of the school from the Church of England authorities.

Mr. Hall is also seeking public help in locating former pupils of the school, especially those who have achieved fame or high public office.

150th year for Newcastle East

The State Director of Primary Education (Mr. O. R. Jones) will be guest speaker at the 150th anniversary dinner of Newcastle East Primary School.

The dinner will be held in Winns Shortland Room on May 10. It will be the first function of the school's anniversary celebrations.

A display of international children's work will be held in conjunction with the celebrations and will be officially opened by artist William Dobell on May 11.

The State Government will be represented at the celebrations on May 11 by the Assistant Minister for Education (Mr. Fife).

Newcastle East Public School is the oldest school in Australia. It began as Christ Church School only 12 years after a permanent settlement was established here in 1804.

In various buildings and with different names, the school has grown through the years from being a place where the children of convicts were educated till now, when it fills the dual role of a public school and a specialist school, catering for deaf children and children with speech difficulties.

Floggings

The school has always been close to the administration of justice in the town. In the early days convicts were flogged in public nearby. Many were the parents of pupils. Later parades of prisoners handcuffed together marched past classrooms up Bolton-street to the Courthouse.

Earliest records show the school existed on May 5, 1816, attended by 17 children between three and 13 years. They were taught by a convict Henry Wrenford. According to recent historical research classes were in a slab hut in the vicinity of Watt-

street, between the Courthouse and the Hunter River.

Newcastle had a population of about 400 at the time, but in two years this had grown by about 200 and the school transferred to the vestry of Christ Church, Newcastle's first church.

In 1820 another convict, Samuel Dell, took charge of 33 pupils. The school grew, till 1828, but was still conducted in the vestry. Some time after 1829, it was moved to a roomier building on the present site at the top of Bolton-street.

For its first 10 years the school was Government controlled but was taken over by the Church of England in

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

1826 and conducted as a denominational school.

As a denominational school, its enrolment varied, as the town reflected the movement of many convicts to Port Macquarie and the gold rushes and industrial and economic troubles in mining and shipping.

Fee 6d week

In the 1860's, attendances reached a capacity figure of 160 pupils some coming from as far as Wickham for a church school education for a weekly fee of 6d.

At the request of parents wanting public schools, a new school was opened in 1859 in Brown-street Congregational Church. This school later moved to the site now occupied by the reservoir in Tyrrell-street. Again in 1878, it moved across the road to a new building, and after 1880, became a superior public school.

In 1906 this school, teaching at a higher standard than an ordinary public school, became Newcastle High School. (It later branched to boys and girls' schools. Its success caused the reversion of the Bolton-street school to the State Government in 1883 as Newcastle East Public School, with its first Headmaster Mr. Edward Byrne, who continued in office for more than 10 years, as new classrooms were added and land was acquired.

Early this century, enrolment increased, and a two-story brick building was built in 1909. More buildings followed two years later.

The present Headmaster (Mr. R. Hall) said the history of the school would be told in a special souvenir booklet being prepared by a Lecturer in Education at Newcastle Teachers' College and Newcastle University (Mr. E. J. Braggett).

Different now!

It was an historical occasion when the oldest pupil of Newcastle East Public School met the youngest.

Seventy-two-year-old Mrs. Margaret Wold, of Fern St., Islington, returned to the school to compare notes with one of the school's younger generation, five-year-old Lorelle Chapman.

And according to Mrs. Wold, who attended the school from 1905 to 1907, "Things have really changed."

When Mrs. Wold attended the school with her two brothers and sister, Newcastle East Public consisted solely of a small building converted from a church, and there were fewer than 100 pupils.

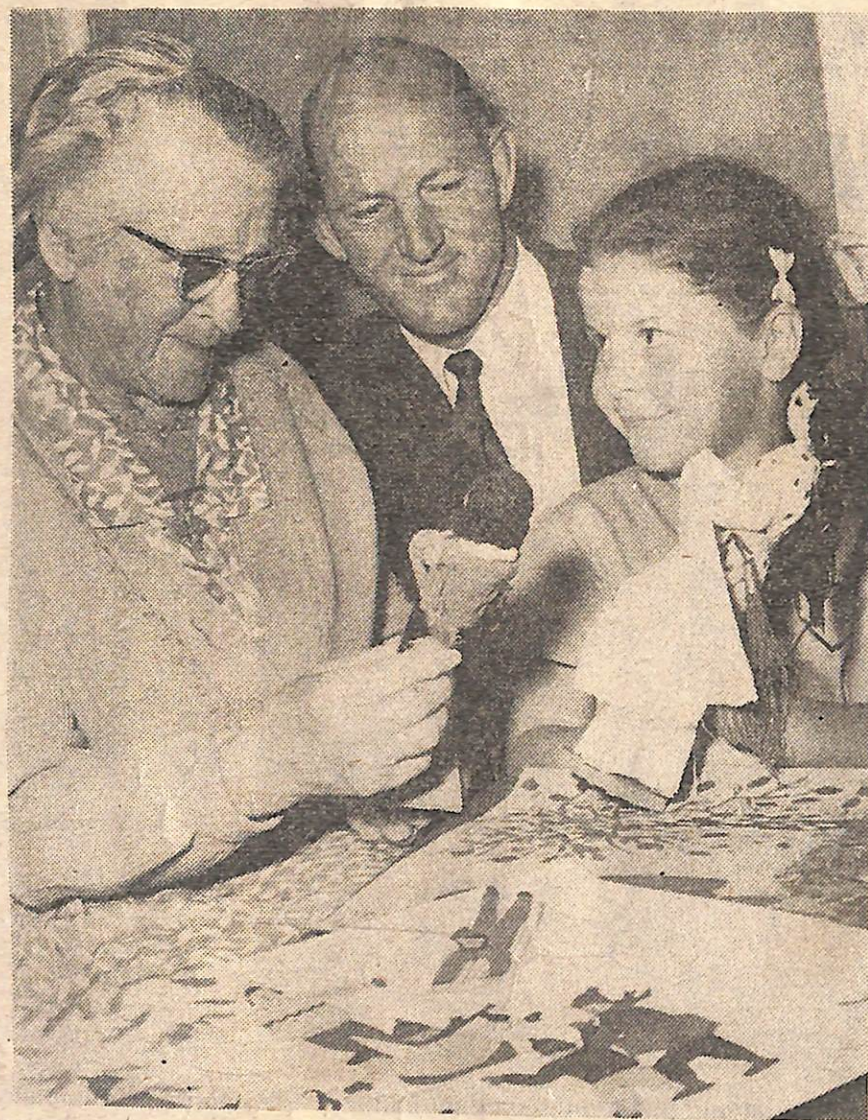
"In those days we wrote in copy books in what I consider better writing than that of today," she said.

"I can remember having typing lessons at 6d a week and the time when I helped plant the pine trees in King Edward Park.

"The great pity was that, like most children in those days, I had to leave school when I was 14."

Mrs. Wold has donated some of her old school books to the special "historical corner" exhibit which will be opened on Commemoration Day, May 10.

The exhibit, which contains documents, photostats and old school books, traces the 150-year history of the school, the oldest in Newcastle.



Newcastle school 150 years old to publish history

Newcastle East Public School P. and C. Association is to publish a book which traces the 150 year history of the school since it was founded in May 1816.

The book is the result of more than two years' research by Mr. Ed. Braggett, MA (Aust.), Dip. Ed., lecturer in Education at Newcastle Teachers' College.

Mr. Braggett's research, assisted with documents from the Mitchell Library, Lands Department, Department of Education and other departmental authorities, has established that the school is the oldest in Newcastle and possibly the oldest in Australia.

The school was set up in 1816 under a command of the Newcastle Garrison.

Seventeen students were enrolled under the tuition of Mr. Henry Rensford.

The school was taken over by the State in 1813 after a petition to the Governor soon after State aid for private schools was withdrawn in 1882.

The P and C has appealed to the public to assist in financing the publication of the book which will outline the history of the school and of Newcastle itself from 1816 to 1966.

The written material is to be supplemented by illustrations of historical documents including a photostat of the actual document establishing the school.

The book—its title has not yet been decided—is expected to become a reference for educational history in Australia and copies will be distributed to educational, public and pri-

vate libraries throughout Australia.

It will also be on sale to the public for a nominal charge.

Bolton St. School's history

Not every school has a book written about it as has Bolton St. school which this week is celebrating its 150th anniversary.

It is believed that Bolton St. is the oldest school with a continuous existence

in Australia, although like most institutions it has had a change of site and changes in control.

The story of the school from its foundation is told by Mr. E. J. Braggett, of the Newcastle Teachers' College staff and of Newcastle University. The book's title is "From Con-

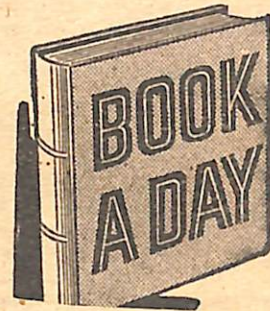
vict Era to Modern Times, Newcastle East School, 1816-1966."

Mr. Braggett had done a difficult job very thoroughly, entailing long hours of research among the archives and not only has he found out forgotten facts but has reproduced many

pictures of interesting documents.

Review by WILLIAM CRAWFORD.

Our copy from the publishers, the Newcastle East Public School Parents and Citizens' Association. (In hard covers \$2.00, in paperback \$1.25).



A picture from the old days



A photograph taken in 1909 will be a valuable addition to the historical exhibition for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Newcastle East Public School.

The photograph, donated by Mr. Ron MacDonald, of New Lambton, depicts the guard of honor formed by boys of the school for the opening of the new school building in 1909.

The building constructed in 1909 is the present school building. Mr. MacDonald, who attended the school from 1903 to 1909, remembers the school buildings before 1909.

Newcastle East Public School, the oldest in Australia, will celebrate its 150th anniversary from May 9 to May 12.

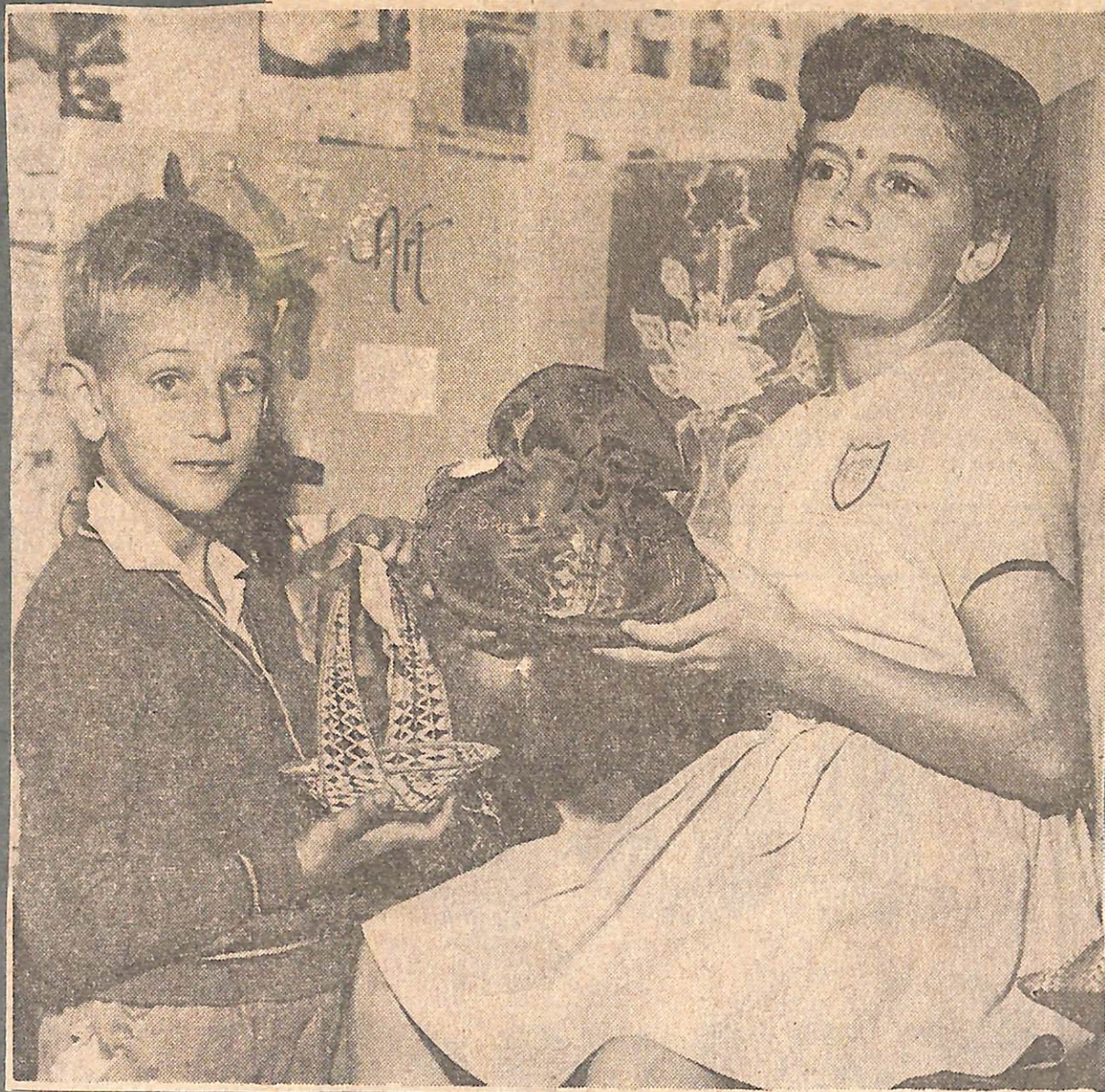
Picture: Mr. MacDonald presents the picture to Mr. J. Jenkins, president of the P. and C., and a former pupil. Another former pupil, Mr. B. Clarke, looks on.

RELATIVE TOO



The Headmaster of Newcastle East Public School (Mr. M. Hall) had a happy surprise yesterday in his quest for the school's oldest living pupil when he spoke to Mrs. Lottie Boyd. They are pictured above. Mr. Hall discovered that Mrs. Boyd is a relative. She is his paternal grand-aunt. Mrs. Boyd was born in 1883 and went to the school in the late 1880's.

WORLD RESPONSE



Examples of children's work from all over the world are pouring into Newcastle East Public School.

More than 3000 examples from primary schools in 30 countries have arrived in the past six weeks.

The school wrote to more than 140 schools in 60 countries asking for samples of children's work for an international exhibition to be held as part of its forthcoming 150th celebrations.

Newcastle East will be the first school in Australia to celebrate 150 years of continuous education on the one site.

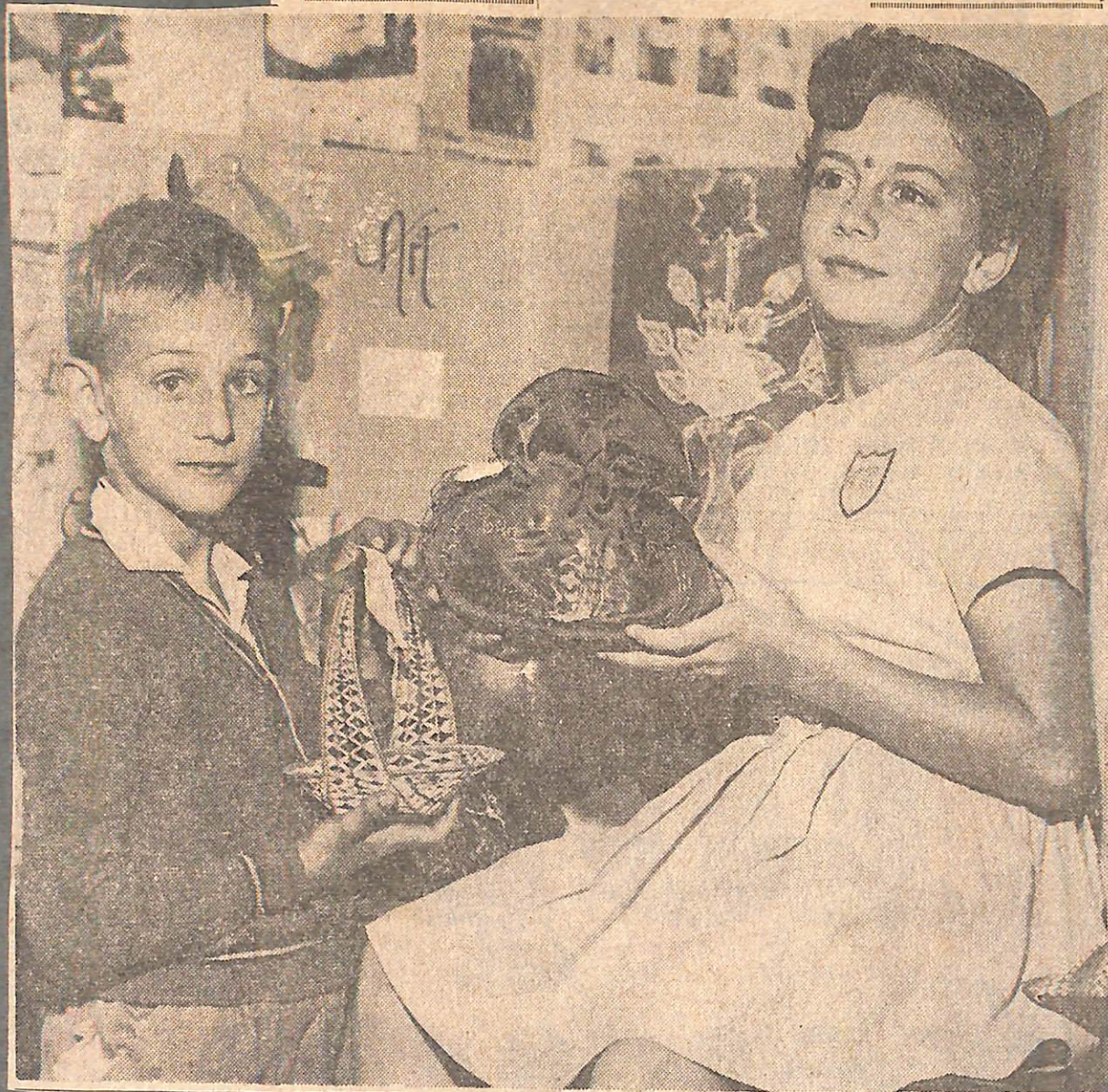
Picture: Stephen Day, 8, and Maree Evans, 9, display wares from overseas.

The Headmaster (Mr. M. Hall) said yesterday that countries represented included South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, Ethiopia, Poland, U.S.S.R., United States, Yugo-

slavia, South Korea, China, Sweden, Norway, Pakistan and Japan.

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Indonesian crafts



● Beautiful examples of Indonesian handicrafts are included in a consignment of exhibits which the Principal of Newcastle East Public School, Mr. M. Hall, received this week from the Indonesian Embassy for inclusion in the school's international exhibition of schoolwork.

Misses J. Reid (left) and H. Bros are seen unpacking the exhibits.

Mr. Hall said the articles, which included some lovely Balanese figurines, was valued for insurance purposes at \$1000.

Newcastle East school, which is one of the oldest in Australia, will celebrate its 150th anniversary in May.

School's 150th birthday



Newcastle East Public School is arranging an international exhibition of primary school work as part of its forthcoming 150th celebration.

It will be the first school in Australia to celebrate 150 years of continuous education on the one site.

Historical research over the past two years has established that the school has been in existence at least since May, 1816.

A committee has been formed to mark the sesqui-centenary. Part of the celebrations will be a display of work of primary schools in 60 countries to illustrate the importance of education as the basis

of knowledge and tolerance throughout the world.

More than 140 schools in 60 countries were asked to send examples of children's work and already large parcels have arrived from Germany, South Africa, Japan, Pakistan, Malaysia and the U.S.A. More are arriving every day.

Children's work received includes delicate needlework from the Sacred Heart School, Lahore; paper scrolls and toys from Japan; filigree metalwork

and wooden lamps from Berlin; colourful art work from Durban Natal; and social study books from Nebraska, U.S.A.

The Headmaster (Mr. M. Hall) said the school also planned to have an exhibition of international dolls. If any person in Newcastle had dolls they could lend, the school would appreciate borrowing them for a week in May.

Mr. Hall said another facet of the celebrations would be a "history corner," consisting of a large cabinet in which photostat copies of original letters and land grants, documents and newspaper articles concerning the school's history would be displayed.

"We are very keen on obtaining any old photographs, books, trophies and school work which could be incorporated into the display," he said.

Picture shows Reece Bretag, 5, of New Lambton Heights, and Kathy Armstrong, 9, of Bennett's Green, looking at the display.

150th ANNIVERSARY

Big program at East school

More than 200 people are expected to attend a special dinner on May 10 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Newcastle East Public School.

Newcastle East is the first school in Australia to celebrate 150 years of continuous education.

The dinner is open to all ex-pupils and their families and others associated with the school.

Interest in the anniversary is mounting as the celebrations draw near.

They will begin on Monday, May 9, with a combined commemorative service in Christ Church Cathedral. The venue is appropriate since the original school began in church buildings on the site in 1816.

The anniversary dinner will be held the following night in the Shortland Room at 6.30.

A special guest will be Mr. O. R. Jones, director of Primary Education in NSW.

History written

An historical souvenir book will be launched at the dinner. Written by Mr. E. Braggett, lecturer in history at Newcastle Teachers' College, it details the history of the school, interwoven with the development of Newcastle during the same period.

Among the guests will be pupils who attended the school at the turn of the century, a teacher who was stationed there in 1909, and ex-pupils who were in a guard of honor at the opening of the present building in the same year.

Wednesday May 11 will be open day at the school.

In a series of ceremonies beginning at 2 p.m., the Assistant Minister for Education, Mr. W. C. Fife, will unveil a carved commemorative sign marking a new milestone in the school's history.

Also to be unveiled are the first of the City Council's historical plaques to be erected at several significant sites in the city, and a roll of honor

listing all headmasters who served at the school since 1816.

Prominent artist William Dobell will open a special international display of children's work from 60 countries, which will be on show throughout the day and evening.

On the Thursday, the pupils of the school will be taken on an historical tour of the city.

The organisers are still anxious to hear from old students of the school. Any wishing to take part in the celebrations should contact Mr. J. Jenkins (2-5191) or the headmaster, Mr. M. Hall (2-2911).

DOLLS FROM OVERSEAS

Two handmade dolls from Korea and a wool and cardboard doll made by an 8-year-old Norwegian girl are among the newest acquisitions for the international exhibition which Newcastle East Public School will hold next month.

The exhibition, to be officially opened by William Dobell on May 11, will be part of the school's 150th anniversary celebrations.

It will be on view to the public for three days.

Picture below shows Linda Warby, 9, of Mayfield (left), holding a Norwegian doll and Sue Hayes, 8, of Newcastle, holding a money box from Penang. At rear is a scroll from Korean schoolchildren which reads: "Congratulations to Newcastle East School on its international exhibition."

The Korean dolls, beautifully dressed in silk and with hand-painted faces, stand 18 inches high.

They were made by a teacher at the Chang Yoing Primary School, who labelled them "Flower Pickers." One doll holds a basket under its arm and the other has a larger flower-filled basket slung across its back.

The glass case containing these dolls was smashed in

transit but the school has had a replica made to protect this outstanding exhibit.

The wool and cardboard doll in ski costume, is the work of Tove Sanner, of Bjolsen School, Norway.

The contents of parcels from 32 schools in 16 countries fill two rooms of the Infants' Department at Newcastle East School.

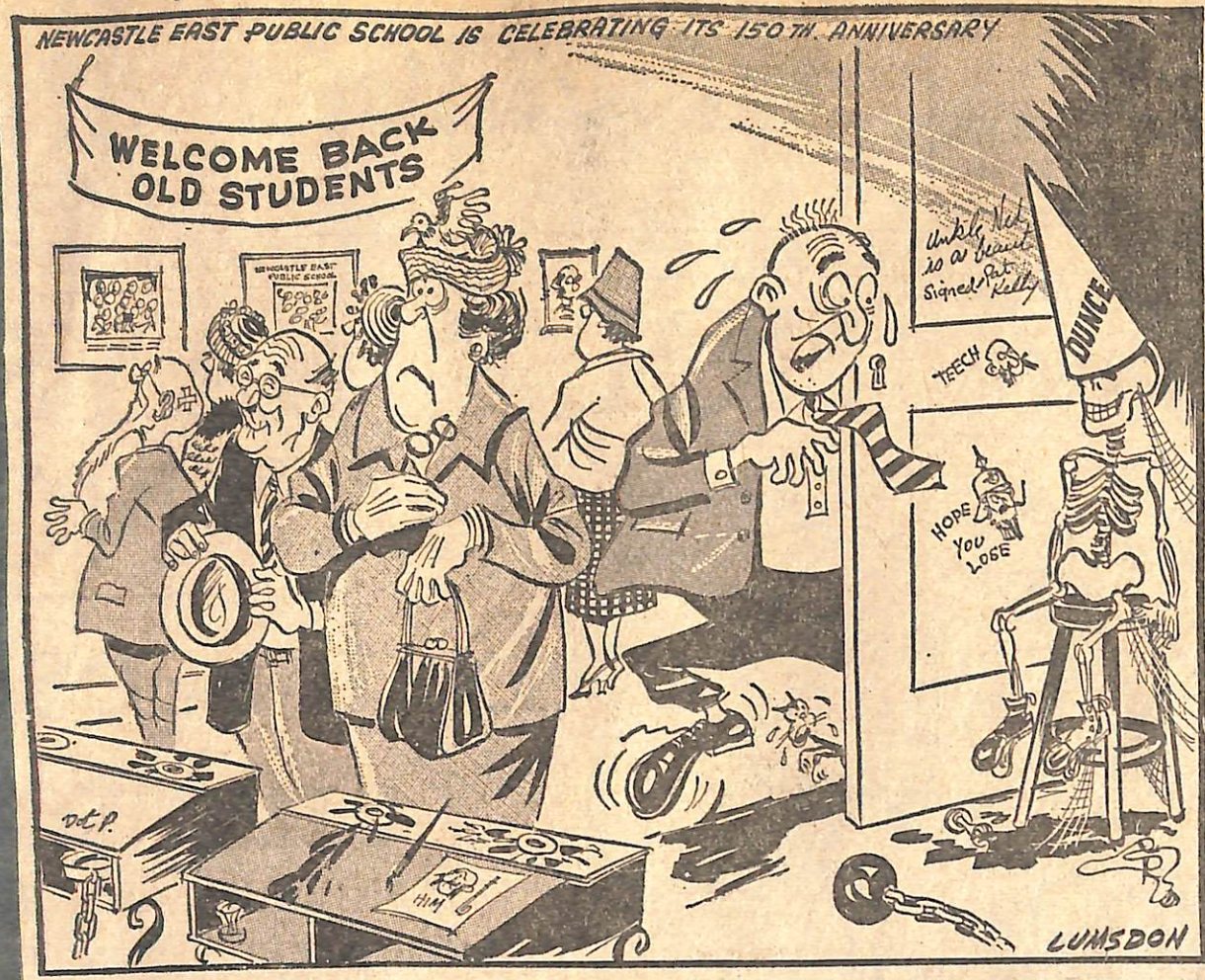
Miss Helen Bros, the staff member who unpacks and sorts the parcels, said yesterday that she had received letters to say that at least five more were coming.

Among the interesting exhibits of schoolwork, art, sewing and other crafts are an aluminium tray, made and decorated by an 11-year-old deaf boy at Bukit Baru Primary School, in Northern Malaysia, doll clothes and moulded fruit from Vietnam, knitted caps and gloves and embroidered linen sent by the pupils of Ballyfin School, Ireland, and papier mache money boxes in the shapes of animals and birds, from Penang.

The parcels began arriving in February after schools in many countries had been approached through ambassadors.



To-day's Lumsdon...



Special celebrations

SCHOOL 150 YEARS OLD NEXT WEEK

Australia's oldest school—Newcastle East Public School—will celebrate its sesquicentenary next Wednesday.

The school opened in 1816 with a convict, Henry Wrensford, as its first teacher.

Governor Macquarie recorded that the school was "to be continued and patronised by every succeeding commandant."

The school not only remained in existence during the convict area, but has an unbroken history for the past 150 years.

The Assistant Minister for Education, Mr. Fife, will unveil special plaques to mark the sesqui-centenary.

A special commemorative dinner will be held next Tuesday night with the Director of Primary Education, Mr. O. R. Jones, as guest of honor.

From foreign countries

Children from 35 foreign countries are contributing samples of their art work, handicraft, needlework and projects and have made special gifts.

A German school has sent a special greeting on a tape recording.

Artist William Dobell will open the International display of the work of children of the world during the celebrations.

Special guests are two children from Port Moresby.



Miss Helen Bros, a teacher at Newcastle East School, surrounded by some of the material sent from 36 countries to the school's international display as part of their 150th birthday celebrations.



Deborah Beiliter, 10, and Alan Collinson, 10, both pupils of the school, take a close look at two flower picker dolls sent by the Chang Yung primary school in Inchon, Korea.

WORLD SHOW OF WORK

Children are the same the world over—trite but true, as will be illustrated in an unusual display of children's work opening in Newcastle next week.

William Dobell will open a display of primary school work from 36 countries in Newcastle East School on Wednesday.

The display has been arranged by the school as part of its 150th anniversary celebrations.

The display features children's art, handicrafts, needlework, and samples of school work: essays, sums, handwriting.

As a comparative exhibition of children's work and study around the world, it has no equal. The Principal of Newcastle East School (Mr. M. Hall) says it is the biggest and most comprehensive he has seen.

BECAUSE of its education value (to adults, as well as children) the display will be available for loan to other schools, and after it has completed a round of schools it will go on permanent display at Newcastle East.

The exhibition represents a monumental amount of organisation by the sesqui-centenary celebration committee.

Last year letters were sent to embassies and consulates, outlining the celebration plans and asking for a translation of a letter to be sent to primary schools in their respective countries.

The response was excellent. The Indonesian Embassy was so interested it forwarded an exhibition of folk crafts, insured for more than \$1000, to illustrate aspects of Indonesian culture.

The aim in organising the exhibition was more than just a colourful gimmick to attract attention. In addition to its educational value, it helps to promote international understanding by showing that children are basically alike, and the importance of education in bringing out their inherent capabilities.

Overseas schools responded well to the request from far-off Australia. Over the last two months a trickle of material has become a flood, till now more than 5000 separate items have been assembled.

About 2000 square feet of cardboard had to be bought to mount the innumerable paintings, drawings and linocuts from all countries; glass cases and cabinets were procured to protect some of the more valuable and fragile items.

The display shows vividly the incredible versatility and artistry of children: it is gay, colourful, immensely appealing in its fresh and naive approach to the world.

It also shows the similarities as well as differences of cultures: rice paddies and dragon festivals from Taiwan, delicate paper work and paintings of children skipping from Japan, elementary Euclid and drawings of the Beatles from Norway, snow sports in Sweden and Switzerland.

FROM the mass of material, it was difficult to select, but items noted during a quick preview this week included a large papier-mache puppet from Switzerland, a scorpion made from painted seeds and wire from Malaya, origami (paper folding) and delicate scrolls from Japan, leprechaun dolls from Ireland, rope figures and copper enamels from Switzerland, wirework and lampshades from a German handicrafts class, football flags from America, murals from England.

Noticeable was the high quality of art work from Northern Europe: the Swiss and Scandinavians especially are some years in advance, experimenting in fields such as ceramics, which are reached only by older children in Australia.

As well as sending examples of their work, the other schools have made many gifts to Newcastle East as an expression of goodwill. They include dolls from Korea, an aluminium tray made by an opportunity class in Malacca, Irish linen, German books, Japanese paperweights, and many prints, school badges and art objects.

And from one small girl in West Germany, written in perfect English in a copperplate hand, a small note of best wishes, ending: "With love."

Newcastle in convict days

By EDDIE BRAGGETT

AS CONVICTS stepped onto the small stone wharf at the bottom of Watt-street in 1816, they would have noticed a little settlement stretching back up the hill, laid out in the valley which is to-day the area around Watt and Bolton Streets.

The site of the Customs House was then a lumberyard on the edge of the water, while nearby was a well, which provided water for the 300 to 400 inhabitants.

A military barracks, a government store, a small gaol, and a little hospital could be seen. No school existed, however, for the children who lived at Newcastle.

Further up the hill was the Commandant's residence and garden, fenced off from the rest of the settlement, and between this residence and the harbour were the slab-huts which some of the convicts had built with permission. Well-behaved convicts could buy and sell these huts if the Commandant gave his approval, but the land remained Crown property. These white-washed dwellings were neat and tidy, even though they were frequently overcrowded with four men living in a small room.

MUCH of the 130 acres of land which had been under cultivation was now falling into disuse, though wheat, maize, barley and oats could be seen growing in the gardens. In addition much of the land had been cleared, and over the hills behind the settlement roamed cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

These convicts could have been pleasantly surprised if they had climbed the sloping hills and had observed the view out over the winding river and the sea. Government visitors even remarked that the green hills and the excellent pasture lands around Newcastle reminded them of parts of England.

But in spite of the favourable impressions, Newcastle was not a happy place in which to live. The settlement was a gaol to which convicts were sent if they offended the law a second time — a place of punishment for Sydney's undesirables. Communication with the outside world was restricted to the seven or eight ships which visited Newcastle each month, bringing provisions and convicts, and returning to Sydney with coal and cedar.

No one was allowed to come to the settlement without Governor Macquarie's permission. The crews of visiting ships had to sleep on board their vessels, and severe punishment awaited any sailor who tried to land any liquor. A curfew was imposed in the township and all persons found in the streets after 8 p.m. were placed in gaol. Marriage between convicts was not allowed.

DURING the summer months the convicts worked from 5 a.m. till 8 when they had a break for one hour. They returned to work from 9 o'clock till noon, and from 2 o'clock till sunset. On Saturdays they were free between 10 and 4 if their assistance was not required urgently, but all resumed work at 4 o'clock. During the winter they were

permitted to have breakfast before reporting for duty at 8 o'clock.

Food rations were given out twice a week, and convicts were expected to do their own cooking, even though they were not issued with cooking utensils. The full ration was barely adequate, but women and children were still placed on half rations.

MAY 5 will be the anniversary of 150 years of education in Newcastle.

There was only one school in the North till 1838.

In that year the school lost its monopoly and church and private schools were established.

The first national, or public, school was not started in Newcastle till 1858. State aid was withdrawn from church schools in 1882.

The school opened in 1816 to-day is known as the Newcastle East Public School.

This is the first of a series of articles in which Mr. Braggett will cover the early development of education in the Newcastle district.

Mr. Braggett is Lecturer in Education at Newcastle Teachers' College and at the University of Newcastle.

There were three main ways in which the convicts were employed. There was a coal-mining gang which worked by the seashore not far from the site of the present Fort Scratchley. In 1817 a 37ft. deep shaft was sunk on the level ground behind the Commandant's residence and the mining gang was transferred to this new location.

This coalmine was not far from the entrance to the present Mental Hospital.

Life for the miners was very difficult. The men worked in bad light under appalling conditions and usually had to remain in a crouching position for long hours. Each hewer was expected to cut 2½ tons a day. This coal was loaded into baskets and dragged to the foot of the shaft, where it was raised in a bucket to ground level. The taskmasters made the convicts work feverishly and beatings were very common. At night they were kept in the mine, being forced to sleep on the pit floor. Most of them slept naked because clothing was unbearable in such heat. On Saturdays they were taken to the surface and allowed to wash themselves in sea water, after which they were marched to the barracks and confined there till early on Monday morning.

ANOTHER gang of convicts was employed in

cutting cedar which grew along the banks of the Hunter and Williams Rivers. The Commandant selected 30 of the more dependable convicts in each of these gangs and sent them up the river to cut the timber. A military guard went with them to prevent escapes and to reduce the stealing which occurred after food rations were given out. The men needed protection from the natives, who at times were troublesome.

Each gang had to fell 100 logs between 12 and 16ft. long in one month. After they had been cut and rolled to the river the logs were sent over the shallows, before being made into rafts of between 75 and 100 logs each. These were floated on the tides to the coast, the trip taking over one week. For shelter the men built huts of rushes and thatch and, on the return trip, similar little huts were constructed on the rafts. When they reached Newcastle the rafts were guided towards the lumberyard at the foot of Watt-street.

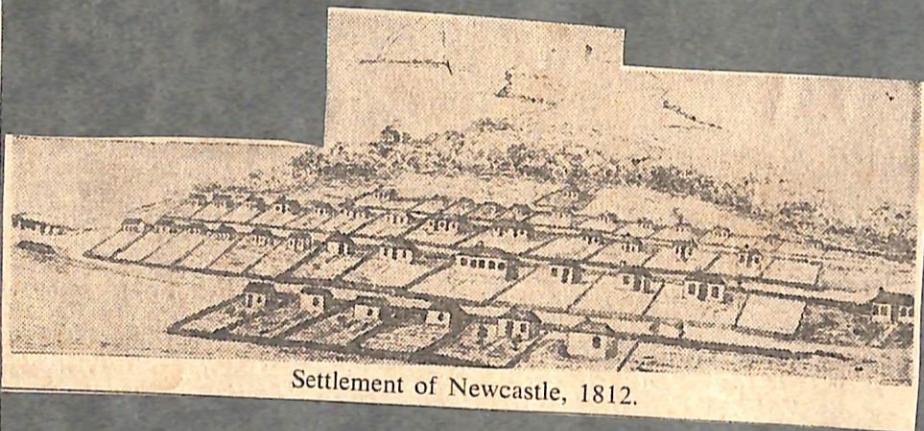
Convicts certainly detested working at the lime pits on the Stockton Peninsula, where shells were plentiful. Governor Macquarie's building policy meant that lime was needed in large quantities, and Newcastle was expected to meet much of this demand. Troublesome prisoners and those who broke the law in Newcastle were sent to the limeburner's gang as a form of punishment. Their job was to collect the shells, take them to the kilns near the water's edge and burn the shell to collect the lime.

Trudging on sharp oyster shells and working in the smoke and heat, convicts had to be spurred on to work by the overseers who frequently laid the cat-o-nine-tails across bare backs. In windy weather the prisoners' eyes were sometimes seriously affected, while at least twice a month the men were forced to wade through the water and carry the lime in baskets upon their backs from the kilns to the ships. About 50 men were in this gang.

MOST children at the settlement were sons and daughters of convicts, although a couple were children of soldiers. Life was not planned for these youngsters and they were free to roam over the hills or the sand during the day and to fill in their time as they saw fit. But it was not paradise for them. Living in a gaol for embittered prisoners, playing next to the flogging triangles upon which their parents could be flogged, and existing amongst "the most abandoned and unfortunate" of men, the influence on the children was very bad indeed.

By 1816 it was decided to start a school in Newcastle to give the children an elementary education and to keep them occupied during the day. A young man, Henry Wrensford, was Newcastle's first teacher.

(Monday: Henry Wrensford.)



Settlement of Newcastle, 1812.

FROM SLAB HUT AND VESTRY TILL TO-DAY —

School has 150-yr. history

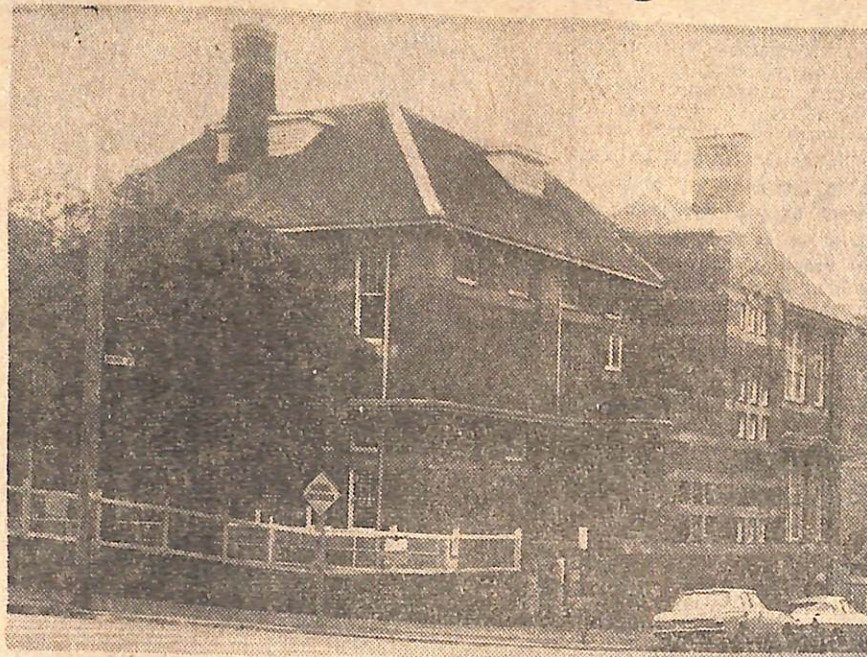
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The master wanted to reach Sydney as quickly as possible, so he did not put into any ports on the outward voyage. One hundred and thirty-one days later the ship slipped through Sydney Heads and anchored near the site of the present Circular Quay.

When he stepped ashore, Wrensford was one of 200 convicts, but it was not long before his sociable manner began to influence other people. In the surprisingly short time of 10 months Governor Macquarie granted him a conditional pardon, and by the end of 1814 he was a schoolteacher in Sydney. Little more was heard of Wrensford till May 5, 1816, when he attached his name to a list of children whom he taught at a school in Newcastle.

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It is not known when he arrived at Newcastle, but it is possible that he came as early as 1815. There are grounds for believing that he became friendly with soldiers in Sydney, and came to Newcastle with them after having received Governor Macquarie's permission. He was certainly at the settlement in May, 1816, and was teaching a small group of children with the approval of the Commandant, Lieutenant Thompson.

Henry Wrensford, now 30, became a well-known figure in Newcastle. He quickly found favour with the Commandant, for, in addition to being clothed and receiving a hut in which to live, he was granted one and a half times the normal food ration, a privilege usually reserved for those on very hard manual labour, or for Government officials.

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Support

The Governor acted quickly. Captain Wallis, who was going to Newcastle as the new Commandant, was informed a week later that Governor Macquarie was highly pleased with the establishment of the school for the convict children, and that it was to be encouraged and supported by "every succeeding commandant."

Wallis was not long at Newcastle before changes were made. He began a building programme that transformed the settlement into a presentable little township. A new hospital and gaol were erected, surgeon's quarters and officers' quarters were built, and a workhouse was constructed and equipped. At Governor Macquarie's command, the construction of the breakwater from the mainland to Nobbys Island was begun in 1818.

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Thieving was very common, refusal to work and insolence to the overseers were weekly occurrences, fighting was frequently reported in the punishment register, and attempted murder was not unknown. Every week the scourgers whipped between 25 and 75 lashes across the backs of convicts who attempted to escape from the settlement. Floggings sometimes lasted for some hours on Sunday mornings.

The flogging triangles, which were near the site of the present Great Northern Hotel, were not very far from the school. It must have been a relief to Wrensford when the school was moved up the hill to the quietness of the church vestry.

By May, 1819, Henry Wrensford had served his full sentence of seven years. He then became eligible for a salary of about £20 a year. As soon as his term had expired Wrensford applied to the Governor for permission to leave Newcastle. At the end of May, 1820, he sailed for Sydney.

'Free man'

He was then appointed to Castlereagh as schoolmaster, but soon afterwards he returned to England for a short period. In 1823 he was back in Sydney and this time it was recorded that he entered the colony as "a free man." Later he ran into trouble again and was charged with theft, but he was acquitted in 1826. He continued to teach in schools around Sydney till his death in May, 1831. He was buried at Windsor.

Many changes have taken place in Newcastle since the little school was begun in a slab-hut, but it still exists to-day almost on the site of Wrensford's original school in 1816. It is now known as the Newcastle East Public School in Bolton-street and has had a continuous history for 150 years, being the oldest school in operation in Australia.

Throughout its long history the school has developed with the city—from the time when Wrensford's hut was surrounded by open paddocks and dusty tracks to the present when the school is situated in the commercial heart of the city and is surrounded by busy thoroughfares. May 5, 1966, is the anniversary of 150 years of continuous education in the Newcastle district.

• Newcastle East Public School, as it appears to-day at the corner of Church and Bolton Streets, 150 years after first classes were held in the area in convict days.

Opening

Sunday, August 2, 1818, must have been a special day for the children of Wrensford's small school for the church was opened then. Mr. Cowper, who had accompanied the Governor and his party to Newcastle, preached the first sermon to a congregation of 600 people. On the recommendation of Captain Wallis, the church was named "Christ Church" by Governor Macquarie.

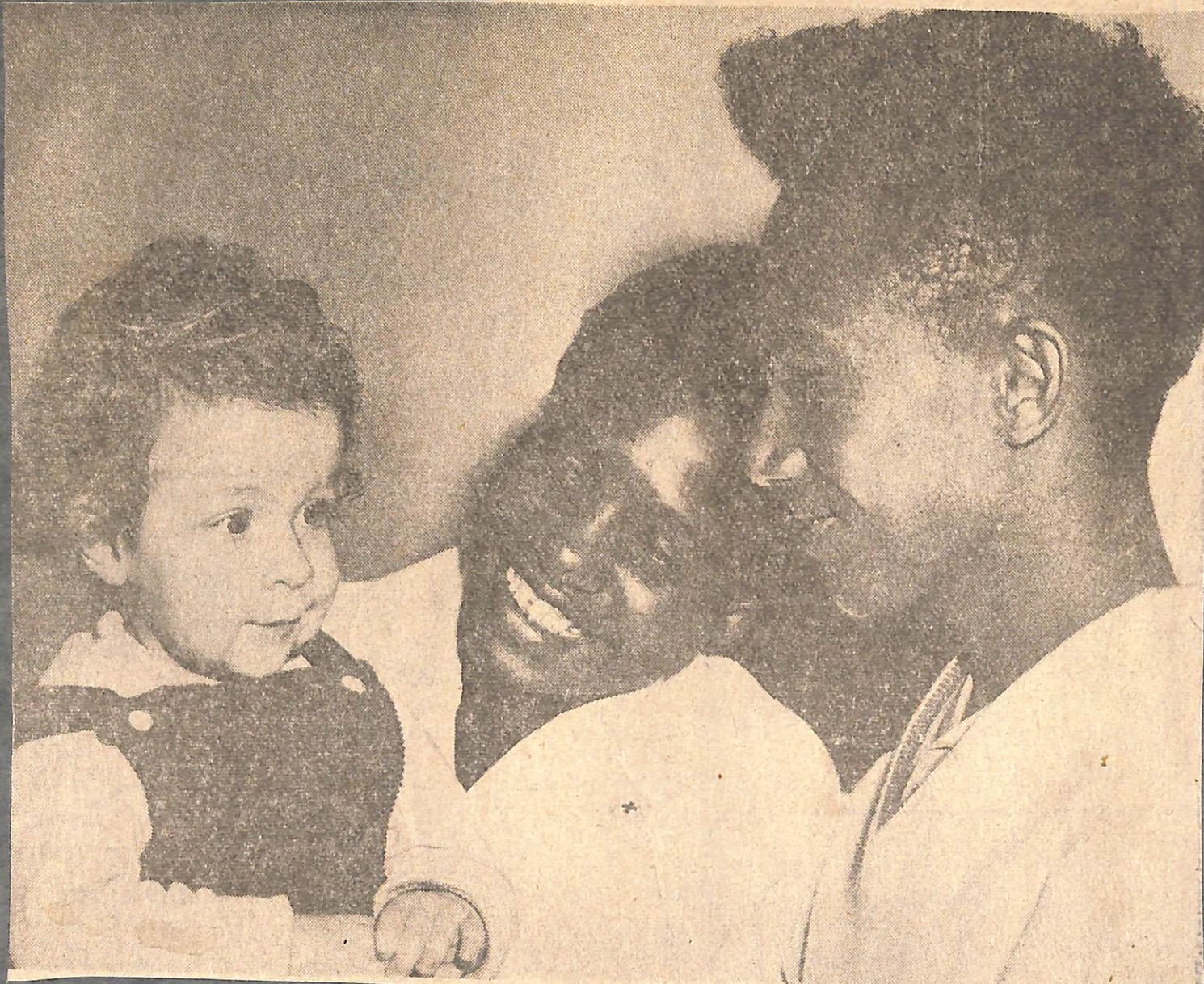
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The enrolment rose as the population of Newcastle increased. The number of inhabitants jumped from 413 in 1816 to more than 1000 in January, 1820, when more than 50 children were in the settlement. In May, 1820, 33 children were attending Christ Church School. Governor Macquarie was true to his promise, and continued to support the school by sending equipment to the teacher every year.

Wrensford saw many changes at Newcastle in his five years at the settlement. He worked under three different commandants, each of whom disciplined the convicts in a different way. It must have been difficult for him to teach young children whose

New Guinea visitors



Kopina Kopi, centre, and Itana Riva, from Koki School, Port Moresby, New Guinea, with Cathy Bros, 14 months, of Merewether. They are visiting Newcastle for the 150th anniversary celebrations of Newcastle East Public School and are staying with Mr. and Mrs. Eros. Koki School raised \$80 towards the fares and the Red Cross contributed the rest. Kopina and Itana were chosen by their teachers and Port Moresby Red Cross.

Hard life for children back in convict days

By EDDIE BRAGGETT

The sun was just rising as the sound of a bell tolled across the sleepy settlement of Newcastle in February, 1821. Within minutes more than 900 convicts were stirring.

Not that they wanted to rise so early, but they knew what would happen if they rolled over and fell asleep again.

Only about 100 free settlers and 50 children could afford the luxury of spending a few more hours in bed.

After dressing in their convict clothes, the men trudged down the dusty, winding tracks — that were later to be known as Pacific, Bolton and Newcomen Streets—and assembled for the roll-call at 5 a.m.

If any did not answer their names, the overseers immediately went looking for the men, and took measures to ensure that late-comers would arrive more quickly in future.

After names had been checked, the men set off for the day's work, some going to the newly-erected carpenter's shop, some to the blacksmith's, and others to the workshop. Timber was plentiful and was cut by the gangs of convicts working 70 miles up the river. The little ships that visited the harbour had to be loaded with cedar or with 20 or 30 tons of coal. A group of men sweated at this task and soon became covered with coal dust.

Lime in their eyes

Jim, let us call him, was 11. He had heard his father talk of work at the limepits at Pirates Point (Stockton). His father had worked there, but had been shifted back to Newcastle after he had deliberately rubbed lime in his own eyes. A number of the men had done this to be sent away from Stockton, but now the overseers had discovered what was happening they were even more severe on the men and whippings were more frequent.

At 8 a.m. his father was home for breakfast. Already he had done a hard shift and the breakfast hour was a very welcome break.

Some of the men from the surrounding wooden huts came and sprawled on the ground where a fire was lit, and a rough breakfast was prepared. No one seemed to get very much to eat. The weekly ration to each person was 8 lb. of wheat and 4 lb. of salt pork. This was divided in two and given out twice a week to prevent prisoners from hoarding food and trying to escape.

The boy knew the men worked in different parts of the settlement. Some worked down at the basins where sea water was evaporated in large pools, and the salt was collected and sent to Sydney. Another man worked at the large windmill on the hill where the wheat was ground into flour. This mill had been constructed the year before.

His own father had been transferred to a new job at the foot of the cliff along the seashore, where a gang of men were cutting into the rock and making a swimming pool for the commandant to use. Many of the convicts called in the Commandant's Bath, but others referred to it as the Bogey Hole.

Nobbys' dangers

Those who worked at the Bogey Hole were wet and cold for much of the day, but it was said that working there was preferable to working in the coalmines where men stayed underground in oppressive heat for most of the week. Perhaps it was also better than building the breakwater out to Nobbys, for men had been drowned and others had been injured by the heavy seas and the strong rips that swept past the gangs of toiling convicts.

The breakfast hour passed quickly and seemed to be filled with the curses of men who complained violently about the hard work, the cruel overseers, and the primitive working conditions. They were hardened men who were embittered against authority. They did not provide the most conducive atmosphere in which to raise children.

The bell sounded again at 9, calling the men back to work for another three-hour

shift. It was also the signal for the children to go to school. Jim, along with 35 others, climbed the hill to Christ Church, where the school was conducted in the vestry.

The children had a magnificent view from the church as they gazed out over the settlement, the river and the sea. Seven streets were spread out below them, and 71 white-washed huts and 13 Government buildings could be counted.

The third of a series of 12 articles on early Newcastle by Mr. Braggett, Lecturer in Education at Newcastle Teachers' College and at the University of Newcastle. The series is linked with the 150th anniversary of Newcastle East Public School, to-morrow. The second article was published on Monday.

School began with prayer and sometimes a hymn was sung before lessons began. Throughout the morning reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic were taught, the children coming out to the teacher's desk to recite their lessons to him.

Great emphasis was placed on drill. Large sections of the work were learnt off by heart. Extracts from the Scriptures were committed to memory. The Church of England Catechism was memorised. Much of the reading in class was from the Bible.

Such lessons continued for three hours, and at noon the children were allowed to go home for lunch. But they were back at 2 p.m. and had lessons for another three hours. The same subjects were again taught, but, if the children were very fortunate, they were allowed to put their slates aside and to write on paper for a short time. Scripture lessons were given.

At 5 p.m. another hymn was sung and the school day was closed in prayer. The children were then dismissed, and had to fill in another two hours, waiting for their parents to return home from work at 7 p.m. The men were weary, and many of them suffered the cuts and the bruises of the lash that was used freely by the overseers. What a strange world it was for these children.

Leisure day

They looked forward to Saturdays, for they were not required to go to school and were free to play around the hills, roam through the swamps around what is to-day the City Hall and Civic Park, or wander over the sandhills between Pacific-street and the gaol, which overlooked the site of the present Newcastle Ocean Baths.

Convicts were also allowed time off from work between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturdays, if their assistance was not urgently required.

On Sundays, however, the children went back to school, and, although the usual lessons were not given, the class read the Scriptures, recited the Psalms and the Catechism, sang songs, and offered prayers. In addition they were taken to church by the teacher, a rather easy task at Christ Church School.

After the first clergyman was appointed to Newcastle in 1821 the Rev. G. Middleton often visited the school. He and the teacher became very good friends.

Convict-teacher

The name of the new teacher was Samuel Dell, who had arrived at Newcastle the year before. The children had already heard why their teacher had been sent to New South Wales. He had been a solicitor's clerk in London at the time of his conviction in 1819, when, together with 15 others, he had been brought to trial for having had forged bank notes in his pocket.

He had pleaded guilty and had said he knew they were forgeries. The Judge (Mr. Justice Best) had sentenced him to 14 years' transportation to New South Wales. It had seemed the sentence would be extended when Dell had been charged with forgery as well, but no one had been

able to prove this, and a verdict of not guilty had been returned.

So Samuel Dell had been kept in prison for seven months before he had been placed on a small ship, Neptune III, of 477 tons, and had been sent to the colony in 1820. On arrival he had been placed on a smaller vessel and sent to Newcastle to take

charge of Christ Church School, because Henry Wrensford was about to leave.

The children liked their teacher—a short, stocky man of 38, with a dark complexion and dark brown hair. He knew they called him "Ding Dong," but he did not object. Even the parents seemed to like him.

Despite his earlier mistakes in England, Dell reformed in Newcastle, and it was not very long before Mr. Middleton asked him to be Parish Clerk. After 1825 Samuel Dell was able to live fairly comfortably on a double salary of schoolteacher and Parish Clerk, in addition to receiving a house for his own use. He led a much easier life than most of the other convicts in 1821.

After the day's work was finished the convicts returned to their huts at 7 p.m., prepared a meal, then fell exhausted into bed. Jim and his parents were fortunate for they had been given one blanket each and a palliase of straw on which to sleep. Many of the other convicts slept on the ground or on leaves and moss, they collected around the settlement.

The sun went down, and by 8 o'clock everyone was in his hut. Convict constables patrolled the settlement during

the night and anyone found in the streets after 8 was placed in gaol and probably whipped the next day.

It was a harsh life and the children were unfortunate that they had to be in Newcastle at all. One of the few redeeming features about the place was the school conducted in the little vestry of Christ Church on the hill.

FOURTH ARTICLE IN SERIES APPEARS ON SATURDAY.

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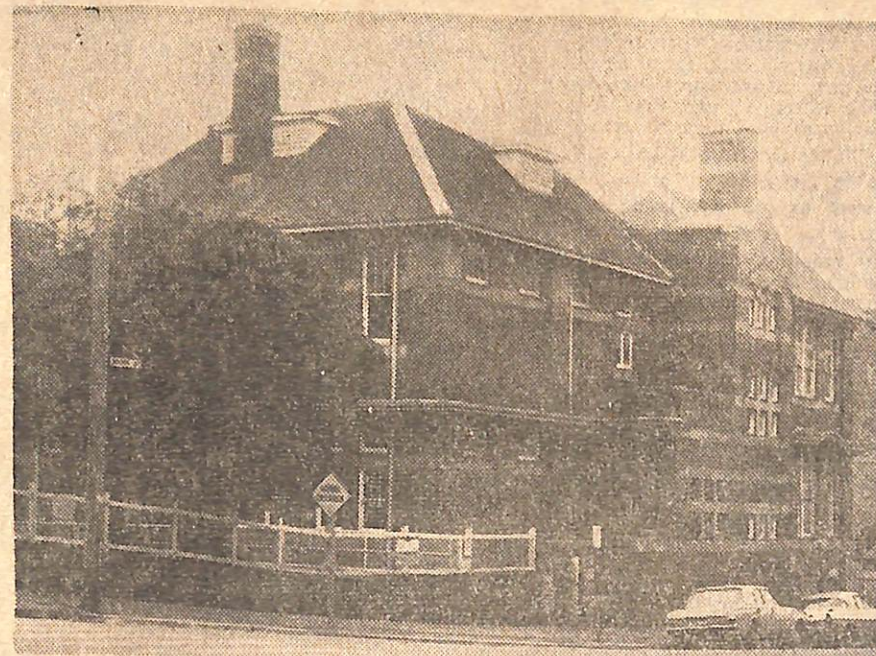
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'Free man'

He was then appointed to Castlereagh as schoolmaster, but soon afterwards he returned to England for a short period. In 1823 he was back in Sydney and this time it was recorded that he entered the colony as "a free man." Later he ran into trouble again and was charged with theft, but he was acquitted in 1826. He continued to teach in schools around Sydney till his death in May, 1831. He was buried at Windsor.

Many changes have taken place in Newcastle since the little school was begun in a slab-hut, but it still exists to-day almost on the site of Wrensford's original school in 1816. It is now known as the Newcastle East Public School in Bolton-street and has had a continuous history for 150 years, being the oldest school in operation in Australia.

Throughout its long history the school has developed with the city—from the time when Wrensford's hut was surrounded by open paddocks and dusty tracks to the present when the school is situated in the commercial heart of the city and is surrounded by busy thoroughfares. May 5, 1966, is the anniversary of 150 years of continuous education in the Newcastle district.



Oldest school in the nation

BEGUN BY
A CONVICT

The Newcastle East Public School, founded by a convict, officially celebrated its 150th anniversary at a special dinner last night.

The school, which opened on May 5, 1816, is the oldest school still operating in Australia.

About 200 people, including many former pupils and teachers, attended the anniversary dinner.

The school captain, Gavin Green, represented the present students.

The oldest former pupil at the dinner was Mrs. Hannah Henderson, who first attended the school in 1890.

Mrs. Gladys Seville, who taught at the school in 1908, was the oldest former teacher.

At the dinner a booklet produced by a lecturer in Education, Mr. E. Braggett, was officially launched.

The book, which covers the history of the school from its foundation, to the present day, is also a history of the City of Newcastle.

Slab hut

Profits from the sale of the book will go to the school's Parents and Citizens' Association.

The school was opened in a rough slab hut about 100 yards from the present site.

When Christ Church was built two years later, the school was transferred to the vestry.

It then became known as "Christ Church School."

Until 1838 the school was the only one in Newcastle, but in that year, other denominational schools were opened.

The school was transferred to the present site in the early 1830's, when the church vestry became too small.

Substantial additions were made by the Anglican Church, which controlled the school, until Government assistance ceased in 1882.

School sold

The Department of Public Instruction then bought the school from the church for £2000.

Buildings now in use at the school were erected between 1908 and 1912 at a cost of less than £6000.

The Headmaster, Mr. M. Hall, is the 33rd teacher to hold the office since the school was founded.

Guest speaker at last night's sesquicentenary dinner was the Director of Primary Education, Mr. O. R. Jones.

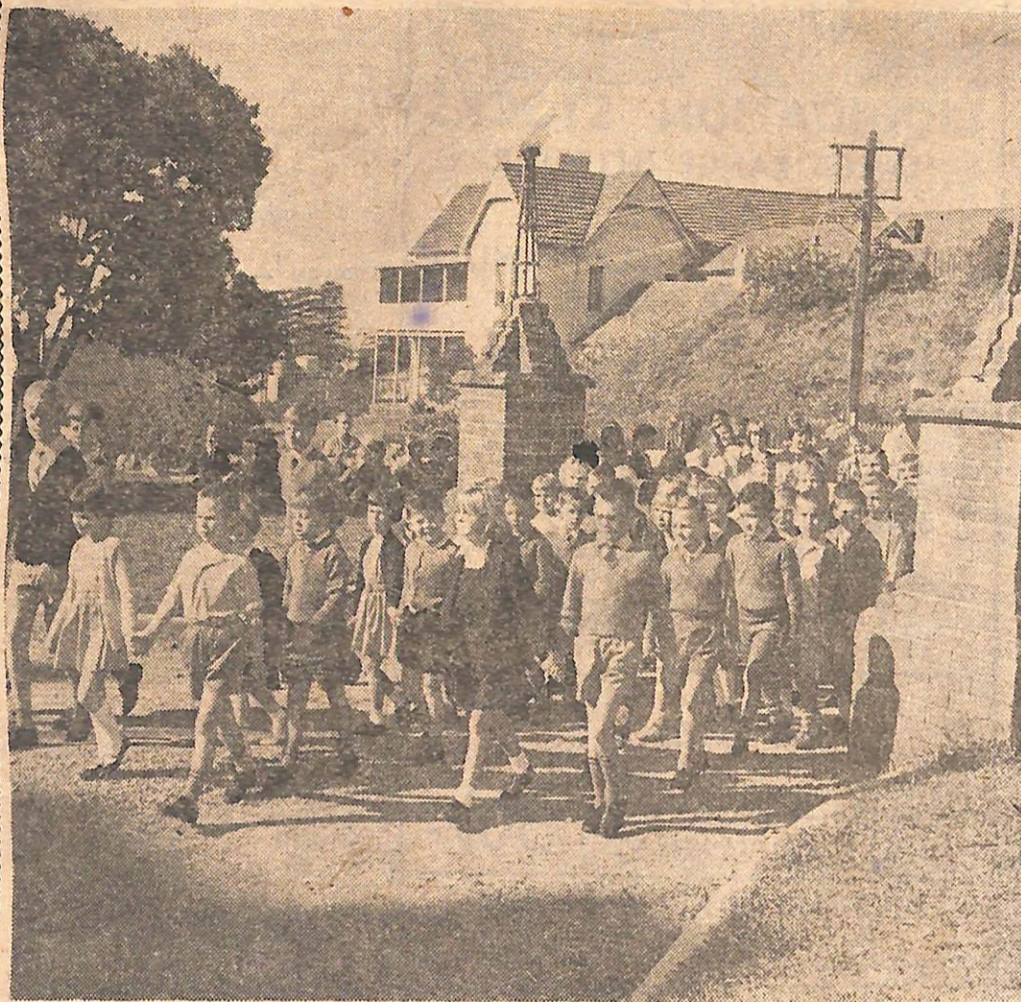
Mr. Jones said the school's 150 years' of education were in keeping with the 2000 years of Western civilisation.

Mr. Jones said the ancient Greeks were the first to realise the value of education, and much of their philosophy was still used in today's education systems.

The foundation of the Christian Church was the other major factor still influencing education of the whole man.

Since the advent of Christianity men had tried to perfect systems of education to mould man of the future.

• School turns 150...



ABOVE: Children from Newcastle East Public School — which turns 150 this week — leave Christ Church Cathedral after a service today. Special exhibition at the school

Page 8. History of the school — Page 10.

Oldest school 150 today

The oldest school in Australia — Newcastle East Public School — celebrated its sesquicentenary today.

The school's first teacher when it opened in 1816, was Henry Wrensford, a convict.

The assistant Minister for Education, Mr. Fife, unveiled special plaques today to mark the sesqui-centenary.

Children from 35 foreign countries contributed to the celebration by sending samples of their art work, handcraft, needle work and projects to the school.

This international display was opened by William Dobell, the artist.

Sydney Mirror

School link



A link with other days at Newcastle East Public School, now celebrating its 150th anniversary, was provided at the commemorative service at Christ Church Cathedral yesterday. Here the Headmaster (Mr. M. Hall) talks with Mrs. R. V. Scott, of Mayfield West, whose father, Mr. P. J. Ryan, was the school's headmaster 40 years ago.

The Herald

Established 1840

Melbourne, May 9, 1966

★ WHICH is Australia's oldest school? Newcastle East public school claims the title. Opened in 1816 with a convict, Henry Wrensford, as first teacher, Newcastle East celebrates its sesquicentenary this week.

There were schools in NSW in Governor Phillip's time, as early as 1789, but Newcastle East is the only one with an unbroken 150 year history.



Government House,
Canberra.

3rd May, 1966.

Dear Mr. Hall,

Thank you for your letter of 26th April, 1966, about the school's celebrations on 11th May. I shall be glad to offer the school history to The Prince of Wales on your behalf.

I shall certainly inform the Governor-General of this auspicious event and it is quite possible that he will instruct me to convey a message to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M.L. Tyrrell".

(M.L. Tyrrell)
Official Secretary to the
Governor-General

M.R. Hall, Esquire,
Principal,
Public School,
NEWCASTLE EAST. NEW SOUTH WALES.



Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle

S E R V I C E

to mark the 150th Anniversary
of the foundation of
The Newcastle East Public School

+

Monday, 9th May, 1966.

+ + +

All STAND and repeat QUIETLY:

O Lord, we come before Thee, To
worship Thee for Thy glory, To thank
Thee for Thy goodness, To seek Thy
blessing for ourselves and others.
Open our lips, that we may praise
Thee. Open our minds that we may
learn from Thee. Open our hearts
that we may love Thee, Through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN:

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the Cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army He shall lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The solemn watchword hear;
If while ye sleep He suffers,
Away with shame and fear;
Where'er ye meet with evil,
Within you or without,
Charge for the God of battles,
And put the foe to rout.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey;

Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day.
Ye that are men now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
~~The next the victor's song.~~

To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally.

PRAYERS:

Defend, O Lord, these Thy children
with Thy heavenly grace, that they
may continue Thine for ever, and
daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit
more and more, until they come unto
Thy everlasting Kingdom. Amen.

Bless, we beseech Thee, our friends
and relations wherever they may be.
Shield them from danger: preserve
them from evil: and guide them in
the way that leadeth to life: through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All together: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, Which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom
come. Thy will be done, In earth as
it is in Heaven. Give us this day
our daily bread, And forgive us our
trespasses, As we forgive them that
trespass against us, And lead us not
into temptation, But deliver us from
evil, For Thine is the kingdom, The
power, and the glory, For ever and
ever. Amen.

THE LESSON: St. Mark, Chapter 10:
verses 13-16.

HYMN:

Loving Shepherd of Thy sheep,
Keep Thy lamb, in safety keep;
Nothing can Thy power withstand,
None can pluck me from Thy hand.

Loving Saviour, Thou didst give
Thine own life that we might live,
And the hands outstretched to bless
Bear the cruel nails' impress.

I would praise Thee every day,
Gladly all Thy Will obey,
Like Thy blessed ones above
Happy in Thy precious love.

Loving Shepherd, ever near,
Teach Thy lamb Thy voice to hear,
Suffer not my steps to stray
From the straight and narrow way.

Where Thou leadest I would go,
Walking in Thy steps below,
Till before my Father's throne
I shall know as I am known.

ADDRESS.

PRAYERS (to be said together):

For the School

Bless, O Lord, our School and guide
us in all that we do there. Strengthen
and direct all who teach and all who
work for the welfare of the School.
Bless all the children and give to
them the desire to learn your will;
to keep your laws and ever to reverence
the truth; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Thanksgiving for 150 years

We thank you, O God, that you have
blessed our School throughout 150
years. We praise you for the lives
of all who have worked for the School
throughout that time and who have
tried to live as your servants. Make
us faithful now, that in our turn, we
may hand on to others a School that
will endure forever, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

For faithful service

Teach us, Good Lord, to serve you
as you deserve. To give and not to
count the cost; to fight and not to
heed the wounds; to toil and not to
seek for rest; to labour and not to
ask for any reward, save that of
knowing that we do your will, O Lord
our God. Amen.

HYMN:

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven,
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing;
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise Him, still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Father-like, He tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes;
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;
Dwellers all in time and space!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace.

+

B L E S S I N G

+ + +

FROM: The Very Reverend J. N. Falkingham

PHONE 2 2052



Christ Church Cathedral
NEWCASTLE, N.S.W.

10th May, 1966.

Mr. M. R. Hall,
Headmaster,
Newcastle East School,
Bolton Street,
NEWCASTLE, N.S.W.

Dear Mr. Hall,

At the Meeting of the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral last evening, a resolution was passed expressing congratulations and good wishes to yourself, staff and organizations connected with the Newcastle East School, on obtaining 150 years of service to the community.

The Chapter appreciates the early connection of the School with the ministry of the Cathedral, and they were anxious that you and your assistants should know of our interest and good will in all that you are doing at the present moment.

With very good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

J. N. Falkingham

Dean of Newcastle.

From the children of many lands . . .

As part of its sesqui-centenary celebrations, Newcastle East Public School is holding a display of the work of children throughout the world.

Children from 35 countries have contributed samples of work performed at school, including art work, handicrafts and needlework. Artist William Dobell will open the displays during the celebrations.



Above: Bernard Brown, 9, unpacks children's work from New Guinea.



Above: Coleen O'Neill (5th class), and Gavin Green (6th class), admire wood carvings from Indonesia.
Right: Sarah Pyper (6th class), with a doll from Korea.



TOMORROW'S NOT JUST ANOTHER DAY FOR THIS SCHOOL

By M. R. Hall

Principal of Newcastle East Public School

When Newcastle East School celebrates its 150th Anniversary on Wednesday, it will achieve an Australian first, for no other school in Australia has held sesqui-centennial celebrations.

History alone will prove or disprove the claim that this school is Australia's oldest. The description "oldest," however, needs some clarification.

Many schools were founded in NSW prior to 1816, but it appears all of these have closed. Newcastle East School is therefore the "oldest" having been operating continuously for 150 years.

Many visitors to the school today look around and exclaim, "Goodness me, it doesn't look so old!" The building is not "so old". It is the sixth building on the third site that has housed the school.



● Mr. Hall with some of the handcraft items which have been received from all over the world for the Newcastle East School sesqui-centennial international exhibition of schoolwork.

INVITATION

The Principal and Staff
of the
NEWCASTLE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL
request the pleasure of the company of
NEWCASTLE CITIZENS
at the Official Commemoration
of the School's 150th Anniversary
by the Hon. W. C. FIFE, M.L.A.,
Assistant Minister for Education,
on **WEDNESDAY, 11th MAY, 1966, at 2 p.m.**

School
celebrates
150
years

... and this is
how they will
do it .

PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 10: Reunion dinner commencing with cocktails at 6.30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. in Winns Shortland Room. Guest speaker will be Mr. O. R. Jones, Director of Primary Education. An historical book written by Mr. E. Braggett will be released at the dinner. Tickets available until tomorrow from Mr. J. Jenkins at Jayes Travel Service.

Wednesday, May 11: Open day at school including a special function at 2 p.m. when the Honorable W. C. Fife, Assistant Minister for Education, will unveil a Commemorative Plaque, School Sign, Roll of Honor of Headmasters and special historical exhibit. Mr. W. Dobell will open special display of children's art and school work from many countries.

Thursday, May 12: Pupils of the school will be taken on an historical tour of the city, and neighboring schools will be invited to view the historical art exhibitions.

Special Note: The historical and children's display will be open from 7 p.m. until 9.30 p.m. on both Wednesday and Thursday for the benefit of those who cannot get there through the day. The public is invited at any time during the day or evening on both days.

The present building was built in two sections (1909-1912) and is only 57 years old. It replaced the old stone building which had stood on the same site for 49 years and which is well-remembered by many ex-pupils.

Another complication when discussing this school is that it has had five official names and several unofficial ones during its history. Therefore, when referring to the school, this could in fact mean The Newcastle School, Christ Church School, Christ Church Certified Denominational School, Christ Church (Public) School or Newcastle East Public School, depending upon the period of history referred to.

Perhaps the school is best known by the unofficial but oft used name, The Bolton Street School.

The complete history of the school is a fascinating tale, and is told in a book written by Mr. E. J. Braggett, MA, Dip. Ed., who is a lecturer at Newcastle Teachers' College and part-time lecturer at the Newcastle University. This book will be released at the Commemoration Dinner to be held on May 10.

Based on two years of research which led him to the archives of the Mitchell Lib-

rary, the Lands Department, the Department of Education, the City Library, etc., the author has found a host of interesting personalities and events, and an enjoyable and readable book has emerged.

It will be one of the major contributions the 150th Anniversary Celebrations will leave for posterity. Australians are gradually becoming more interested in their history and heritage. Thus this book not only supplies a present day need but will be increasingly appreciated as years go by.

INNOVATION

Most people are very interested in comparisons between the school of today and yesterday. "How do the third graders of today compare with the third graders of 100 years ago?" is often asked.

First of all, sixth grade in the Primary School is a 20th century innovation, and fifth grade was added last century.

A hundred years ago doctors were plying their clients with rum before strapping them down to the table and then sawing off a limb with a saw that was unwashed since the last operation.

Dickens tells us of the very young boys who were taken as apprentices on condition that their parents sunnied them with a coffin. There has been great progress since those times, and educationally the rate of progress has been much the same as in other fields. Thus true comparisons are impossible and certainly meaningless.

When Henry Wrenford started the school for the poor children of Newcastle in 1816, the aims of the school differed greatly from the school of today.

The Commandant at Newcastle felt this was one way to keep the children out of mischief; he realised that a few hours spent out of the vicious home environment of the convict parents would be a positive gain; and it was considered that learning to read the scriptures was the best method of imparting religious instruction.

This religious instruction would lead to a more moral individual and prepare him for the hereafter. Basically, these were the aims of education at the time. There was certainly no thought given to education as a training for work. Indeed, current thought was more likely to be that the "lower classes" were destined for lowly laboring work and education (as we know it) would more likely impair the laborer's capacity than improve it.

Each decade of the school's history changes in the aims, the methods, the teaching and the equipment deemed necessary to achieve the product required.

The changing status of the teacher is clearly revealed through the history of the

Newcastle East School.

The first two teachers were convicts (and would not have to be paid) and they could read and write.

No further qualification was required. Apart from convicts, teaching was an occupation for those who could read and write, but were more or less a failure at everything else.

To try to improve the standard of teaching, the Church of England brought out teachers from England. However it was not until the late 1860's that real progress was made.

At this time a system of inspection coupled with teacher gradings was implemented. Teachers henceforth had to study privately, pass examinations and show improved teaching ability to get higher teaching marks—and higher pay.

The pupil teacher began his career at about 14 years of age. A pupil teacher at this school in the 1870's attended lectures by the headmaster for an hour before school.

After then teaching the normal school hours he went home, did his homework, prepared lessons for the next day and continued with study. Such was the routine of Fred Nicholls, remembered by many ex-pupils as a headmaster for 20 years.

The next step to improve the quality and status of teachers was the establishment

of a Teachers' College and the specific training for teachers. In the last couple of decades there has been a tremendous expansion of Teachers' Colleges, and qualifications to attend any of them have risen.

This again reflects the changing character of the Newcastle East School since its inception.

From being the only school in Newcastle for its first 23 years, its role has changed completely. Nowadays, it is one tiny cog in the Primary wheel which turns the Secondary wheels. Thus, the school's diminishing significance has reflected the growth in the educational amenities of the city.

AMAZED

During the past few months, many old-timers have been contacted and have joyfully reflected upon their school ories. Most of their memories are happy ones. Our school ex-pupil attended the school in 1878, and clearly remembers the headmaster was "a lovely man".

School prizes won by this pupil in 1884 have been donated to the school's History Corner. The "good things" of school last century were the concerts, the camps, the picnics and the races. The school program was

accepted—much as it is today—and the pupil devilmant seems to have differed only because the situation was different. All the "oldies" are amazed at the changes that have taken place, but some of the buildings to be seen from the school were there before the turn of the century.

There was no parent body at the school until comparatively recent times, but there have always been men who were intensely interested in the school's progress.

Church leaders, City Councillors, Departmental officers and laymen stud the school's history with speeches, letters and petitions aimed at the improvement of the school and its product.

The State-aid question has been the most contentious problem of education in the history of NSW and the argument can be traced through the history of the school. Some interesting side-lights of this are:

State-aid to the Anglican Church resulted in an educational monopoly in Newcastle—the Newcastle East School.

Extension of State-aid resulted in half a dozen schools all within a stone's throw of the present school during the 1840's.

The parents of the school petitioned the Government to take over the school when State-aid was withdrawn in 1882.

A recent visitor to the school, upon being told of the intention to celebrate the School's 150th Anniversary, remarked,

"Speaking as an Englishman, I'm glad. Australians should be starting to put their roots down."

The celebrations at the school are attempting just this, and to corrupt another's quotation.

For those who understand, no explanation is necessary;

For those who do not, no explanation is possible.

DOBELL'S PRAISE



William Dobell with children's paintings.

CHILDREN'S ART WORK "AMAZING"

NEWCASTLE, Wed.—World famous artist William Dobell said today the absence of critics enabled children to do amazing art work.

HE said the children who had no critics just "slathered away" and produced some outstanding work.

Mr. Dobell was opening an international exhibition of work by children of the world at the Newcastle East Public School.

The exhibition has more than 5000 pieces of all kinds of arts and has been drawn from most countries of the world.—

It is a feature of the

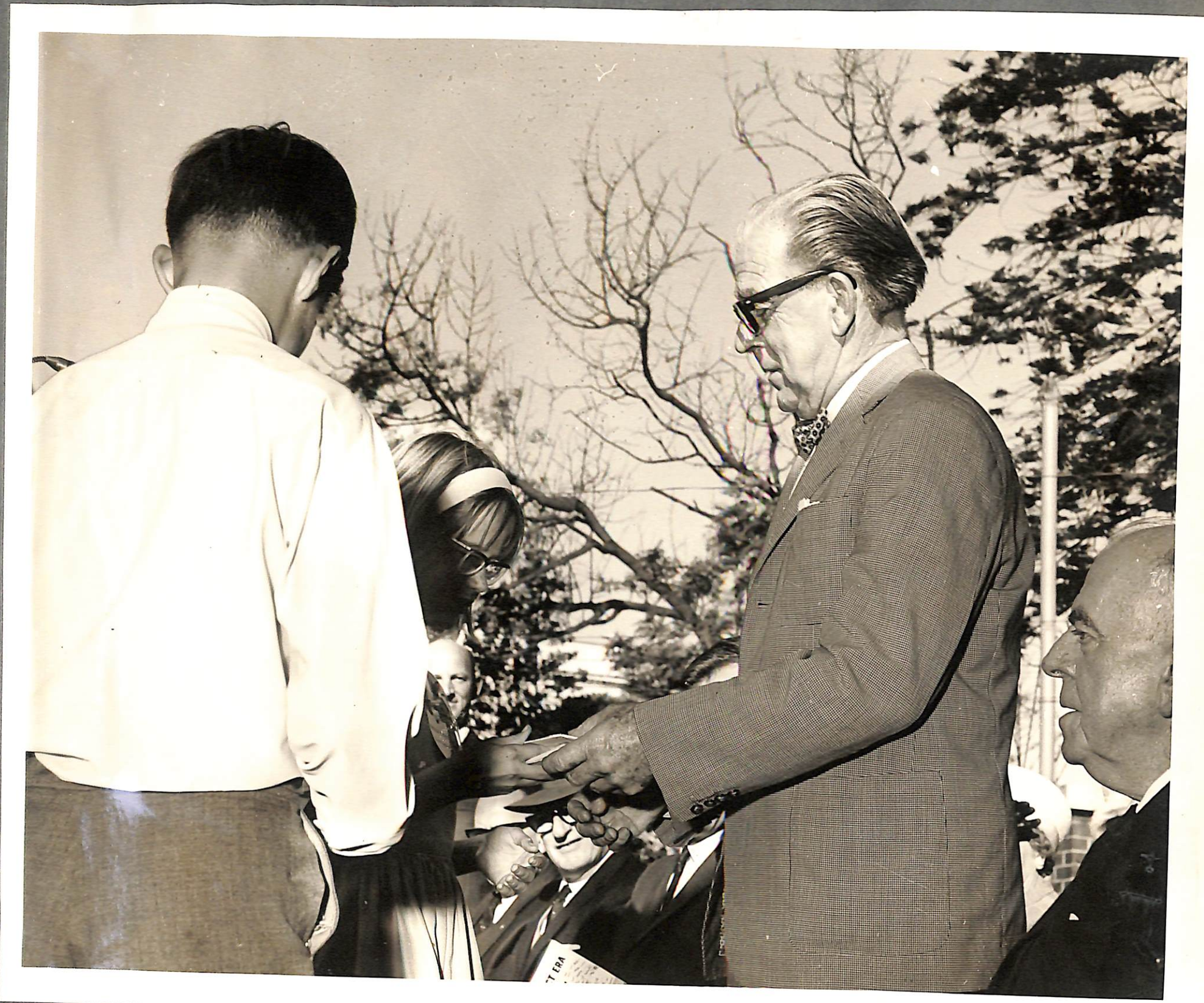
Newcastle East Public School's 150th anniversary celebrations.

The school is the first in Australia to celebrate its 150th birthday.

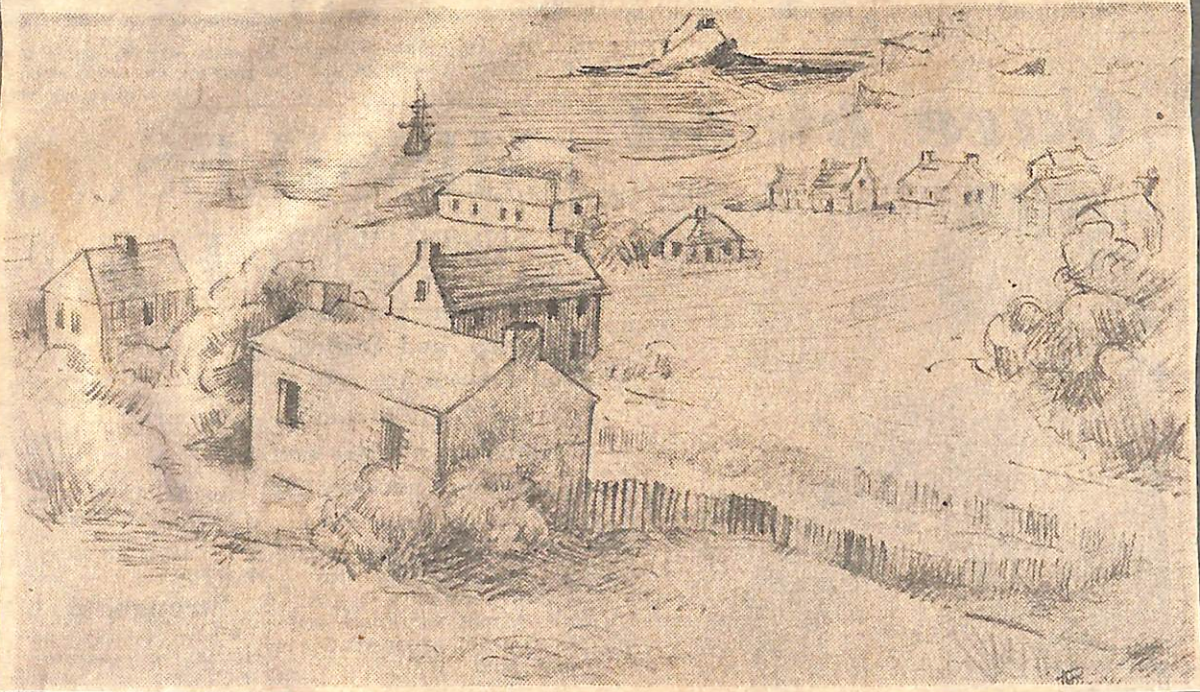
Mr. Dobell said: "I hope they never hang any of my pictures alongside some of these in the exhibition.

"They would make mine look old-fashioned and almost stodgy.

"There are one or two exhibits in this exhibition I would love to own."



Six schools within three blocks



● Newcastle East School on the corner of Bolton and Church Streets in 1845. The sketch is by Margaret Ray.

The fifth of
a series of
12 articles by
**Eddie
Braggett**
an early
Newcastle.

*The series is linked
with the 150th anniver-
sary of Newcastle East
Public School, which is
being commemorated
this week.*

*The fourth article ap-
peared on Saturday.*

"THE PRISONER is to receive 100 lashes." This was a sentence passed in Newcastle Courthouse in 1829, but it was by no means harsh or unusual. A large, two-story, wooden building on the corner of Watt and Church Streets served as Newcastle's Courthouse in the 1820's and 1830's, and was the scene of many such sentences.

The prisoner, who worked at one of the Government coalmines in Newcastle, had sent up coals to the surface before they had been checked by one of the overseers. When a constable had told him to have them checked first, the miner had answered, "I don't give a damn." For this offence he was given 100 lashes.

75 lashes

A man named McDonald was given 75 lashes for attending divine service while he was intoxicated. Another was placed in the stocks for two hours for fighting when drunk. Still another was ordered to work in irons for three months because of a theft he had committed.

The records of early Newcastle indicate that the settlement was still far from pleasant, even after most of the convicts had departed.

During the early 1830's most of the 200 convicts were accommodated in barracks near the flogging triangles close to the site of the present Great Northern Hotel. Only a select few still lived in huts farther up the rise towards King-street, and this meant that the prisoners and the free settlers did not mix very frequently.

Other changes had occurred at Newcastle. During the 1820's the Government coalmines were worked very inefficiently. Few of the tunnels were propped up, and the conditions were quite dangerous. Most of the miners had not had any previous experience in mining and their methods were slow and cumbersome. To-day we are not even sure of the exact location of some of the early mines.

In 1826 the government handed over these mines to the newly-formed Australian Agricultural Company — or more simply the A.A. Company. At the same time, the

directors were given a monopoly of mining rights and received a grant of almost 2000 acres of land in Newcastle.

It was decided to abandon the old mines and to sink a new shaft at the top of the hill near the present intersection of Brown and

Church Streets. The new workings became known as the "A" pit, and reached a depth of almost 50 feet.

At first the convicts were put to work at the mine, but it was found that they were so much trouble and wasted so much time that the management decided to bring out trained miners from England.

The entrance to the mine was over 100 feet above the harbour level, and the problem of transporting the coal to the ships had to be solved. The hill was very steep, and in places reached a grade of 1 in 3.

The company decided to construct a "railway" on which coal trucks, each containing one ton of coal, were sent down to the water on an endless rope. The weight of the descending skips was more than sufficient to raise the empty skips to the pit top once again. In order for the trucks to cross the main street, a bridge was constructed, and the coal passed over Hunter-street on its way to the company's wharf.

The first coal to reach the harbour in this way was sent down in December, 1831, and was sold for 8/ a ton.

The town of Newcastle reached only to the site of the present Winns department Store in 1830. After leaving the scattered homes in this area, one came to the town reserve, which stretched for almost two miles.

Much of this region was poor, sandy soil and some of it was very marshy, but vegetable gardens could be seen wherever the soil was of better quality, and these gardens provided for the needs of the settlement.

704 people

The population continued to rise during the 1830's, and at the census of 1836 there were 704 people in the town. Of these, 51 boys and 59 girls were under 12 years of age.

Not all the children attended school, but it was quite apparent that Newcastle's only school, the Anglican School in Bolton-street, would not be able to accommodate all the children who wished to attend during the next few years.

So, it was not surprising when a private school was started in 1838 in the home of William Jay and his daughter on the corner of Church and Newcomen Streets. Miss Jay carried on this school

after her father's death in 1840.

It was very small and had only 13 pupils in 1838, but it was important because it broke the long monopoly of the Church of England School, and gave parents a choice of schools to which they could send their children.

By 1842 there were two private schools in Newcastle, catering for more than 50 children, and in the following year there were five in the Newcastle and Raymond Terrace areas. They did not continue in existence very long, however, because the education they provided was sometimes of a poor quality, and the teachers were rarely well qualified.

There were more than 200 Roman Catholics in Newcastle in 1836 and many of these objected to sending their children to the Anglican School, where the Anglican Catechism was taught.

In 1838 Rev. Father C. Dowling arrived from Maitland and became the first Catholic priest at the settlement. He opened a temporary church that could hold 150 people, and by 1841 there were 70 people who usually attended.

Land given

With the help of Father Dowling a Roman Catholic School was started in Newcomen-street. In 1845 three grants of land were made to the Catholic Church at Newcastle, and one of these small blocks was to be used for school purposes.

In October, 1842, the Wesleyan Church opened a small school in Newcastle, after Rev. Johnathan Innes had been appointed as the first ordained Methodist minister in the area. The Government gave the school some financial assistance, and 39 children were attending in 1843 when Mr. Lightbody was the teacher.

Two years later the school was moved to the Wesleyan Chapel which was constructed on the hill in Newcomen-street where the A.B.C. Studios are now located.

In the 1840's the chapel was surrounded by bare, open paddocks, and the crooked railing fences were sometimes the only indication that the area was used at all.

Not to be outdone the Presbyterians applied for a grant of land and were given a block opposite the Anglican School in Bolton-street. It is now the site of the Grand Hotel, near Newcastle Courthouse. Ninety-six children attended during the year and although the attendance was not always as high as this the school remained popular.

The teacher, John Stewart, was related to Rev. R. Stewart, who conducted Presbyterian

church services each Sunday in the Courthouse on the corner of Hunter and Bolton Streets where the post-office now stands. This imposing stone Courthouse was constructed in 1841.

The pupils of the Presbyterian School were moved to The Junction area in 1869. In 1872 the school was converted to a public school and still exists as The Junction Public School.

In addition to these new schools the Christ Church School continued in Bolton-street. Numbers naturally fell when other schools were established, but the Church of England School had one advantage not shared by the others. It was a free school, entirely supported by the Government. All the others charged a weekly fee if parents were able to pay.

Elisha Hayes and Henry

Didsbury were teachers at Christ Church School during the 1830's and their place was taken by Alexander Flood and his wife, Phoebe, in 1837. This couple had married in India in 1826 when both were in their 20s and for three years they helped to brighten not only the lives of the children, but also the social life of Newcastle.

They later kept the Calcedonian Hotel in Bolton-street and were associated with social events, especially the balls, that were held in the town.

Thus by 1845 there were Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Schools within 150 yards of each other and this area was further interspersed by private schools.

To meet this competition the Church of England trustees decided to erect a new stone school on the corner of Bolton and Church Streets.

The building was constructed in 1845 and later in the year the Bishop of Australia visited the class on an official visit. He examined the 62 children in the Scriptures, in writing and arithmetic, and indicated that he was very pleased with their progress and conduct.

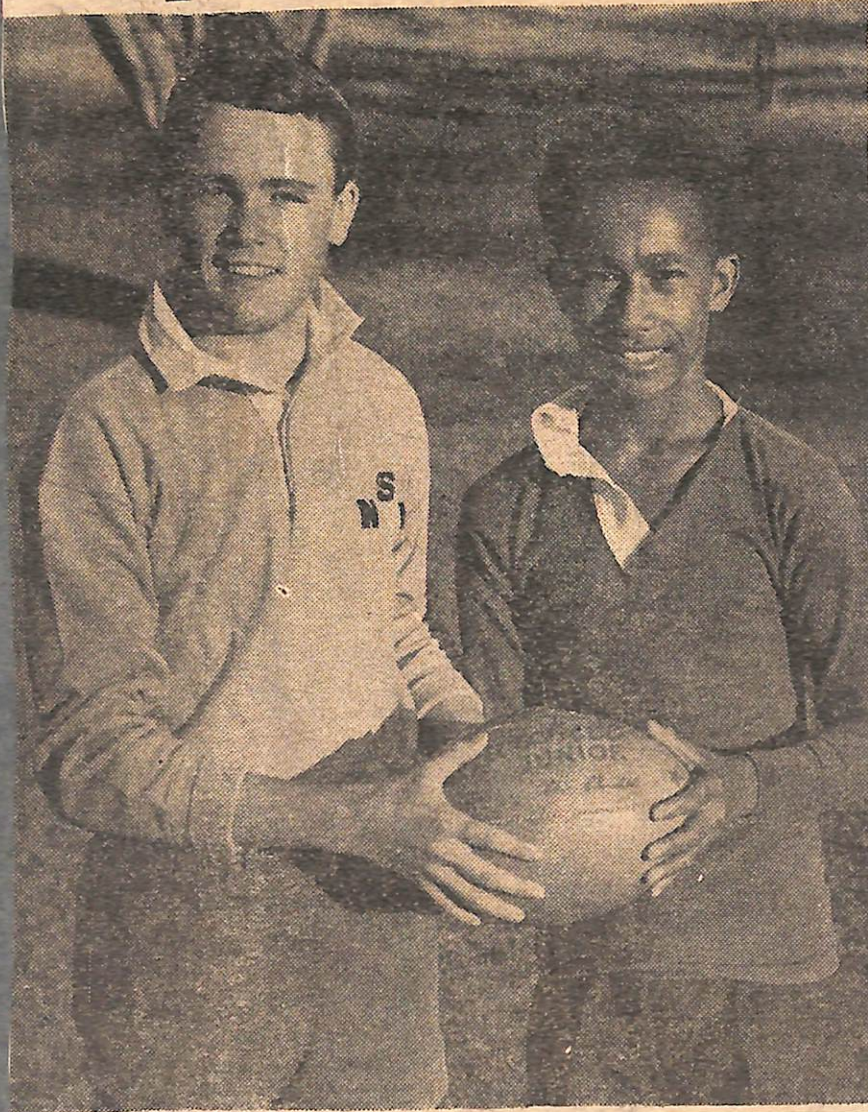
By this time the slab huts of the convict era had been replaced by brick and stone buildings. In 1847 there were 193 houses which lined the unformed streets of Newcastle and the population of the town had risen to 1471. Men outnumbered women by 5 to 2.

There were indications that Newcastle was changing but no one could have seen the rapid expansion which was to occur during the 1850's.

Newcastle in convict days

Sporting rivals meet

again



Last season young Peter Clark, of Merewether, captained the New South Wales 8-stone Rugby League team on a tour of Papua-New Guinea.

A reserve for the Papua-New Guinea side against the blue-jerseyed New South Welshmen was Itana Riva, a 13-year-old schoolboy from Koki, Port Moresby.

Itana's brother Roua was a member of the team.

Which explained why young Peter received a call from Itana in Newcastle yesterday.

Itana was in Newcastle for the Newcastle East Public School celebrations.

He was brought to Australia for a fortnight's holiday by the Junior Red Cross.

Yesterday a game of Rugby League was arranged between pupils of the Newcastle East School and Peter and Itana were the respective captains.

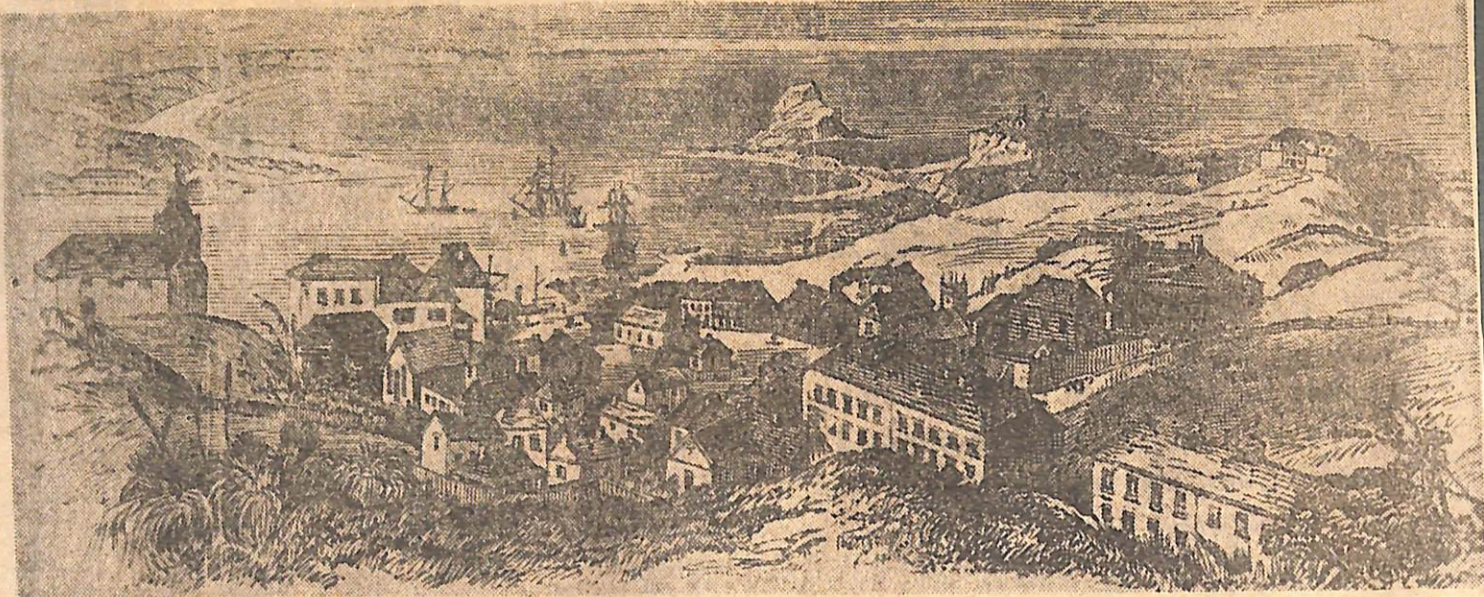
Itana hopes to return to Australia in July as a member of the Papua-New Guinea 8 stone side.

So yesterday's clash between the pair probably will not be their last.

FOOTNOTE; Peter's team won the match 3-0.

Picture shows Peter Clark (left) and Itana Riva discussing tactics before yesterday's match.

END OF THE CONVICT DAYS



How different Newcastle was in 1850 compared with the convict settlement of former years. Most of the inhabitants were now free settlers with little memory of the dismal conditions of the early 1820's.

Social life was developing. Race meetings were held for the first time in 1847 at Merewether and later at the Broad Meadows.

The first regatta was conducted on Newcastle Harbour in 1845. Handball was a popular pastime. As one walked down the streets, the thud of the ball and the excited shouts of the men could often be heard through the swinging doors of the taverns.

Of numerous hotels in Newcastle the most popular were the Ship Inn, opposite the Courthouse on the corner of Hunter and Bolton

Streets, the Newcastle Inn in Hunter-street, and the Australian Inn, the Commercial Hotel and the Queen Victoria Hotel in Watt-street.

Visiting sailors helped liven the place. The town began to quicken to the increasing trade half way through the 19th century.

A Philharmonic Society was formed in 1845 and monthly concerts were given at the new Courthouse in Hunter-street. Tickets cost 1/6 or 2/6. The building was used for many social events and meetings.

The breakwater was completed in 1846 and people walked to Nobbys for the first time. Convicts were retained at Newcastle till 1855.

Suburbs spread in Newcastle

A view of the City of Newcastle in 1857.

Wales from England and California settled in the Newcastle region. Within 10 years the population of Newcastle rose from 1340 in 1851 to 3562 in 1861.

With such a rapid expansion, the suburbs began to develop. Stockton, which had already grown as Newcastle's first suburb, may trace its history back to 1834. In 1851 its population was 166. This had risen to 661 just over 10 years later. Hexham, though not part of Newcastle proper, dates from 1840. It grew because of the trade carried on by the river. Minmi also dates from 1845.

Till 1847 the city could not expand past Darby-street because the area west of this was owned by the A.A. Company. But in that year the company lost its monopoly of mining rights in the Newcastle district. This allowed other companies to sink shafts in the outlying areas. As a result the miners moved to the new pits, and the suburbs soon grew.

Subdivision of the A.A. Company's land began in 1853. Next year an area of land near Honeysuckle was offered for sale. This is to-day the region around the Bank Corner and the Steel-street Markets.

The township of Waratah was in existence by 1874, Wallsend by 1860, Lambton by 1862, Carrington (or Bullock Island as it was called) by 1865, and New Lambton by 1869. All of these settlements were dusty little places wholly dependent on coal mines for support, and when coal production fell off the people suffered badly.

10ft. coal seam

In 1848 a 10ft. seam of coal was discovered near the present St. Peter's Church of England on Cameron's Hill (Hamilton). The A.A. Company sank a borehole, and a shaft was completed in 1849.

The little settlement of Pittown, somewhere near the present Beaumont-street, was a residential quarter for the miners engaged at the pit. All this area was to develop into the suburb of Hamilton.

To reach the place, one had to leave the road near the present Cooperative Store in the West End, and either take the rough track to Hamilton or take a shortcut through the scrub to the present site of Gordon-avenue. The suburbs were separated from the city

Continued p 5

however, to carry out constant maintenance work, for the heavy seas caused considerable damage to the breakwater. It was then only a few feet above the high tide mark, and was narrow.

The last public hanging took place in Newcastle East—overlooking the present Ocean Baths—in 1848. It was an unfortunate occurrence at which the onlookers threatened to lynch the hangman.

Future executions took place at Maitland Gaol.

About the same time there were events in England which were to have important effects on the town of Newcastle. In 1847 a solemn procession entered Westminster Abbey, and the Right Rev. Dr. Tyrrell was conse-

crated Lord Bishop of Newcastle.

The sixth of a series of 12 articles on early Newcastle by

EDDIE BRAGGETT

The seventh article will deal with the opening of public schools in Newcastle after 1858.

crated Lord Bishop of Newcastle.

Till this time there was only one Anglican bishop on the mainland of Australia, and it was impossible for him to give much attention to any areas outside of Sydney. So Dr. Tyrrell was appointed to the newly-created Newcastle Diocese, which extended to what is now the Queensland border.

Cathedral

He arrived in January, 1848, and was installed in Christ Church on the last day of the month. The white church, which had been built by convicts in 1818, was renamed Christ Church Cathedral. It was not long before Dr. Tyrrell's influence was felt on education in the diocese.

Because of the Bishop's appointment the town was given the status of a city and was renamed the City of Newcastle. The "Sydney Morning Herald" claimed in 1848 that Newcastle was "the smallest city in Her Majesty's domin-

ions." The year before, the census had shown 1471 people were living in the area.

Bishop Tyrrell believed that with six schools within 150 yards of one another it was possible to begin a grammar school, so the vestry of Christ Church Cathedral was used once more as a schoolroom. In 1853 a teacher, Mr. Wilkinson, was appointed, but he stayed only a few months.

It was not the school that repelled him, but rather the residence in which he was expected to live. He described it as a most dilapidated hut, scarcely habitable, in which "in rainy weather the shelter of umbrellas was necessary." His successor was disgusted also and soon left.

The Church of England was not responsible for the poor building because even though the trustees tried to have it repaired, they could not find a builder in the city. They had all rushed off to the goldfields.

Grammar school

It was not till after 1855 that a Boys' Grammar School was erected in Church-street opposite the Cathedral. A teacher's residence was attached. This school provided for 20 boarders. The fees were 60 guineas a year.

If the boys did not do their own washing, the fees were slightly higher. The subjects taught included Latin, Greek, mathematics, history, geography, bookkeeping and English composition. French and drawing were optional.

Gold was discovered in the Bathurst area early in 1851 and numbers of people rushed off to the diggings to make a quick fortune. Some were lucky enough to ride to the goldfields, but many trudged from Newcastle to Bathurst.

As they left the pits and started on the long trip, the miners found that they were accompanied by sailors who had deserted from ships in the harbour, by labourers who hoped to make money quickly, and by professional men who were caught up in the gold fever.

The news of the discovery of gold soon reduced the population of Newcastle, but it was only for a few years. The numbers then suddenly rose as many of those who had migrated to New South

CONVICT DAYS

From p. 4

itself by thick bush. The poorly-formed, dusty tracks were a hazard even in good weather. In wet weather they were almost impassable.

The southern area from Denison-street to Glebe-road was in a worse condition still. Beaumont-street itself was a heavy, sandy road from Donald's Store—now the intersection of Tudor and Beaumont Streets—to the railway line. Thick scrub and ferns lined each side of this track. The houses were few and rudely constructed since they had been hastily built for the miners.

National school

Naturally a school was slow to be started in such a place as people thought first about developing the mine and building houses. A school was begun in 1857 in a slab hut by a teacher named Mr. Bryant. In December, 1858, the school became a National School and the teacher was paid by the Government.

Little money was available for education and in 1867 it was reported that the Hamilton school was "very unsuitable and much out of condition, being extensively damaged by the whiteant." Seventy boys and 61 girls attended this school in 1865.

Hamilton was fairly representative of most of the suburbs of Newcastle during the 1850's and 1860's. It was a simple story of the discovery of coal, the opening of mines, and the growth of small settlements for the miners. Schools came after the little townships had grown large enough to support teachers.

Till 1958 there were no public schools in Newcastle. Private schools and church schools provided the only education available, and it was often of very poor quality.

So, with the development of Newcastle and the suburbs after the gold rushes, the churches found it impossible to provide schools for all the children who desired to attend, and public schools were begun.

A CRICKET match was being played just off Darby-street in 1857 between the "Marrieds" and the "Singles." Nearby was a church that was being constructed on land donated to the Church of England by the A.A. Company.

Bishop Tyrrell stood and watched the cricket, but it was evident he was far more interested in the discussion in which he was involved. The men occasionally turned and gazed at the church, and remarked on the size of the building and the adjoining schoolroom.

It had been decided that it would be called St. John's Church of England, and everyone present hoped the new church and school would be opened early in 1858.

Closer attention would have detected a note of worry in the men's discussion, for they had heard that a public school was to be opened in Newcastle the following year. It is true that Christ Church School in Bolton-street was still in operation and that St. John's School in Darby-street would soon be completed, but Bishop Tyrrell believed well-run church schools were much more effective than public schools.

After all, the Bible was not read in the public schools, nor was the catechism learned by the children. It seemed that these schools were a deliberate attempt to take religion out of the classroom, and to try to teach a vague subject called Scripture which children from all religions could attend together. Both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church objected, however, when they found that their own denominational teachings could not be emphasised in public schools.

EARLY in 1858 the Government opened the first public school in Newcastle. No one knew whether this new type of school would succeed, so it was decided to wait for a few years before special buildings were erected. Thus, the basement of the Congregational Church in Brown-street was used in 1858, the first teachers being Mr. and Mrs. Webden.

The church received 7/ a week for rent, and the children were expected to pay weekly fees to cover this cost and to supplement the money earned by the teacher. Part of Webden's salary was paid by the Government, but it was still expected that the teacher would collect extra money from the pupils.

When the inspector visited the school early in the year, he found 42 boys and 30 girls sitting at the long desks, but he was disappointed to find the children were unsteady and were quite talkative. As he left at the end of the day, the inspector told Webden he would have to keep better control in the future. He criticised the playground which was only partly fenced, and suggested that toilets could also be provided for the children.

Four years later the school was severely criticised when it was found pupils frequently stayed away, or arrived late of a morning if they did attend. They were often untidy in appearance and very inattentive in class. The lessons were not sufficiently detailed, and the teacher's questioning needed to be improved. The inspector forgot to add, however, that the Government had accepted Mr. Webden as a teacher even though he had never been trained.

THE people of Newcastle soon showed that they were not indifferent to the poor condition of the school. The Mayor of Newcastle (Ald. James Hannell) and five of his friends formed a committee and arranged for the erection of a school in Tyrrell-street. This is now the site of the reservoir opposite the present Newcastle Boys' Junior High School. The land was donated by the Government and was described as being "to the rear of the Roman Catholic Chapel, and in close proximity to the new Wesleyan Chapel."

On a Saturday afternoon in October 1862 there was considerable excitement when the children assembled at the Congregational Church in Brown-street, formed themselves into a procession, and marched up the hill to the new site. A brass band was in front, the members puffing rather loudly as they climbed the Brown-street hill.

The speaker, Mr. Adam, indicated that the basement of the church was inadequate for the 90 children who regularly attended, and that it was intended to provide a building for close on 300 children. This was a large school, he added, but he could not see any reason why that number of pupils could not be found.

In 1863 a similar gathering was again held when the school was officially opened. The new teacher, Mr. Thompson, moved into the first building actually designed as a public school in Newcastle. Seventy-four feet long and 34 feet wide, it provided so much room for expansion that the following year there were 185 children regularly attending and there was still ample accommodation. This had risen to more than 220 in 1868.

THIS, however, was not the end of the story. The school building had been erected, but it had not been paid for. At this time it was the policy of the Government to ask the local inhabitants to pay one-third of the cost of a new school, and James Hannell and the other members of the committee had raised a loan, and had donated a further £200 themselves to meet this requirement. But when they appealed to local citizens to subscribe to the new building, there was little response.

A doorknock appeal was organised, but so little was raised that the whole city was canvassed twice more. When these were unsuccessful bazaars were held and concerts were given, but still they were unable to raise more than £200. It appeared that the committee would have to pay almost £500 out of its own pockets, and it was only with the help of the Government that the debt was finally settled.

After the public school had been opened in the Congregational Church in 1858, it was only a matter of months before similar schools were opened in the suburbs. One began at Mayfield the same year, another at Hamilton in 1859, and still another at Stockton in 1860. A new brick building was erected for a public school at Minmi in 1861, and in the following year schools were opened at Wallsend and Waratah.

After 1864 schools sprang up in many suburbs of Newcastle and in 1865 alone

classes were established at Lambton, Plattsburg, Hexham and Barnsley.

LAMBTON was a typical mining suburb. Thomas Croudace was only 23 years of age when he arrived in Newcastle in 1861, but his early association with coalmining in England and the time he had served as the assistant manager of a colliery in Durham soon proved to be helpful to him.

The Lambton area was covered with heavy bush, and the first task was to clear the land. By 1862 coal seams up to 11ft. thick had been reached and in the following year a large shaft had been sunk and coal raised to the surface.

But the coal had to be transported to the ships in the Newcastle Harbour, and after permission had been obtained from the Government, a railway was constructed from Lambton to Waratah linking up with the main line. Finally in November, 1863, the first train of coal was ready and it left the colliery — without an engine.

It was a slight downward grade all the way to Waratah, and it was only a matter of releasing the brakes on the coal trucks and allowing them to roll gently to the main line. A brakeman sat on the side and applied the brakes in an emergency. A team of horses pulled the empty waggons back to the pit. It is interesting to note that the subway near the Lambton Swimming Pool was the bridge over which these trains used to pass one hundred years ago.

A settlement quickly grew as miners arrived seeking employment. Houses were hastily erected — often poor in design — and shops were opened to cater for the needs of the people. As in most mining communities there was soon a number of hotels to serve the 400 inhabitants.

PARENTS naturally desired that their children should receive an education, and late in 1864 they applied to the Government for a public school. It was promised that 86 children would attend, and that a site for the building would be donated by the colliery manager. In addition the management offered to contribute one-third of the cost of the school. Lambton was fortunate in that it did not suffer the same problem as the Newcastle Public School during the 1860's.

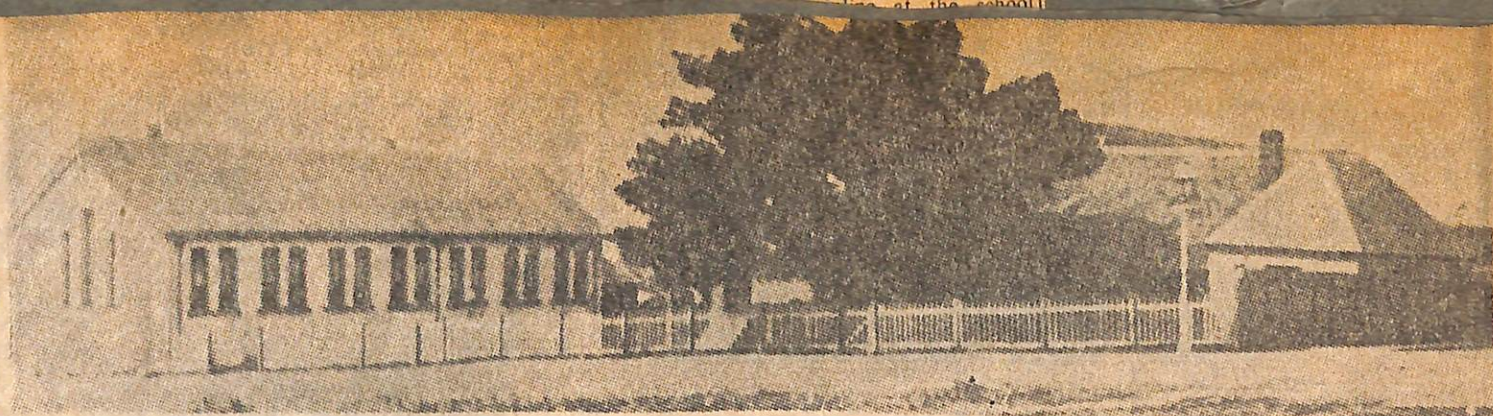
The inspector agreed that a school was badly needed in the area and recommended that a large building be erected to provide for the increasing population. Naturally the attendance fluctuated from time to time as the coalmine was not in full-time operation. Work on only one or two days a week was not an unusual occurrence.

The manager of the Lambton colliery informed the educational authorities in 1870 that all boys employed at the mine would attend school on those days when the mine was not working. The Lambton Public School was fortunate in that it had the strong support of the colliery management. Most of the collieries, however, gave support to schools in the suburbs of Newcastle.

[The next article is by Cliff Cranfield on the history of education in the Wallsend area.]

Public school idea catches on

By EDDIE BRAGGETT



School goes in as coal comes up

FIVE DUSTY streets greeted the eyes of George Suttie as he rode over the hill.

The year was 1862 and Suttie was arriving to take up the position of teacher in the mining settlement of Wallsend.

Along the street stood the houses of the miners while groups of grimy children played happily outside them.

On both sides Mr. Suttie could see the coalmines on which the population of Wallsend depended for a living.

His living also depended on the mines because a proportion of the fees paid by parents for the education of their children went to the teacher as part of his wages.

Decision

Wallsend's future had been decided by a small group of men in an office in Pitt-street, Sydney. A meeting early in 1858 decided to form the first Australian company to mine and sell coal. This decision was directly responsible for the transformation of a tiny village into the town of Wallsend.

The first shaft was in operation by early 1861. By the beginning of 1863 three mines were working.

The miners had brought their families with them, and there were soon enough children playing in the streets to force their parents to provide a school.

The Newcastle - Wallsend Coal Company gave a calico tent to be the first school. This soon proved inadequate, so the company gave a building.

This was the building that captured the attention of Mr. Suttie as he rode into Wallsend in 1862. Slabs of hardwood crudely nailed together provided the walls. The roof was of shingles. As a school it was woefully poor. It had no playground or toilet facilities. At one stage more than 150 children were being taught under these conditions.

After heavy criticism from the inspector, the people of Wallsend built a new school. The Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Company made a generous grant.

By this time George Suttie had left for East Maitland and his place had been taken by a very unpopular teacher. The parents insisted that this teacher should not take charge of the new school.

The inspector supported their arguments when he reported that the discipline of the school was poor and that the teaching was only "tolerably" successful.

CONTINUING the series of articles on early Newcastle begun by EDDIE BRAGGETT,

CLIFF CRANFIELD

writes about the development of education at WALLSEND. This is the eighth article in this series, which is linked with the 150th anniversary of Newcastle East Public School.

The picture, taken from the corner of Brooks and Martindale Streets, Wallsend, between 1886 and 1891, shows Wallsend Primary School and headmaster's residence as they were then.

So when the school was opened in 1871, another teacher, Mr. Willis, was in charge. He proved popular with parents, pupils and inspectors.

The people of Wallsend were most interested in the great educational dispute in the 1870's — whether education should be free, secular and compulsory. They formed the first branch of the Public Schools' League to be formed outside Sydney, in 1873.

This was an organisation that sought to stop financial assistance to church schools.

It quickly became obvious that the people of Wallsend were interested only in making education free.

The miners of Wallsend often had only a half-day's work in a week. Since they had to feed and clothe their children, it was little wonder they wanted free education.

Teachers also suffered since their salary from the Government was not sufficient to keep them — nor was it intended to, for the parents of the children were expected to pay fees as part of the teachers' wages. This meant that in times of economic hardship the teacher usually went without most of his pay since the parents of the children spent the money on food and clothing.

The miners did not want education to be compulsory because young boys could help

the family by working in the mines. Neither were the miners in favour of education by the churches, mainly because the denominational schools were expensive.

The Anglican denominational school at Wallsend and the Catholic school at Plattsburg did not receive much support from the miners — not because the people were irreligious, but because of the financial circumstances of the miners.

In 1874 the population jumped when a large number of miners and their families arrived from Ballarat. The children strained the accommodation of the school to the limit and the people of Wallsend again went to the Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Company for help.

Their plea was suspiciously like blackmail because they pointed out that the Co-operative Coal Mining Company in Plattsburg had provided £300 for a school there.

So it was not surprising when a school was rapidly built. The inspector described the school as "excellent."

Transfer

It was unfortunate for the people of Wallsend that Mr. Willis was transferred early in 1876. This disrupted the steady improvement in the school that had been taking place under his capable guidance. Nevertheless, it was fortunate to obtain the services of Mr. Walsh in 1877. Under his control the school prospered.

In 1882 the school became a Superior Public School—a primary school with secondary classes added. In future it was to accept primary and secondary pupils. At this stage 772 were enrolled in the school.

The large number attending indicated the tremendous expansion that had taken place at Wallsend. When the train service in Newcastle began in 1861, one covered waggon accommodated all passengers.

Now, even though proper passenger carriages were used, extra cattle waggons had to be fitted with wooden seats so that all who wanted to travel by train could do so.

By the 1880's there were enough people in Wallsend to support 30 hotels. Wallsend was a gay town on pay Fridays.

ers' Training Institution in Sydney.

Mr. Melville, who was appointed headmaster in 1888, held the highest certificate of teaching awarded by the Government. Such a certificate was rarely awarded and his possession of it says much for the standard of instruction at the school.

Under Mr. Melville's control the school rose in status. It became a first class superior public school and taught pupils up to the university entrance standard.

The teachers were willing to help all pupils who wanted to go to university. This included giving free lessons after school.

Whether the university was the goal of the children many seemed keen to gain an education. There were many who would have followed the example of Elizabeth Blacklock who walked to school from Jesmond every day because the school there did not have any secondary classes.

Change

Despite the unspectacular beginning seen by Mr. Suttie, Wallsend by the 1890's had become a highly respectable town. Debating and discussion groups met regularly at the School of Arts. Football and cricket teams represented Wallsend over much of the State. The Wallsend racecourse and Jockey Club were widely known in the Hunter Valley.

To-day Wallsend is a prosperous town though it has undergone some reversals of fortune in its history. Four years ago the primary school celebrated its centenary. It now has a staff of 20 and fine solid buildings — a far cry from the days of the calico tent.

THE lad sat at his desk and puzzled. "How many farms each containing 55 3/8 acres can be formed out of 10,000,000 square inches of land?" The inspector was visiting the school in 1876, and he had set this problem for the fourth-class pupils to solve.

Victor was twelve and attended the Christ Church Anglican School on the corner of Bolton and Church Streets.

Ever since his teacher had heard that the inspector had returned to Newcastle the class had been given many problems similar to this one. They had been shown how to answer this type of question and how to check quickly whether it was correct or not. It was a little harder than those set by his teacher but by following the rules closely Victor was able to get the right answer.

The inspector walked around the class making sure that no one attempted to copy from others. After a time he asked them to put their slates on the desks, to fold their arms, and to sit without talking. He went along the rows and checked each pupil's answer, after which he wrote something in a little book.

THEY were then told to clean their slates and to answer the next question. Unfortunately this one was different from other types they had been given, and most of the pupils sat for a long time and thought of what they should do. "I bought 3 7-9 hogsheads of spirits at £1/1/4 per gallon. How much water must be added to it to reduce the price to 17/6 a gallon?" About half the class had the correct solution. They could look forward to answering many similar types of problems after the inspector had left the school.

The inspector gave each child a piece of paper, and then read a dictation passage to them. It was quite long and a great deal of punctuation had to be included. Their teacher had given them a little rule which they now tried to remember. "If there is a short pause in the sentence, you will put a comma; if there is a long pause in the middle of the sentence, you will put a semi-colon." The passage that the inspector was reading contained six long pauses.

The next part of the examination was one that Victor did not like very much — English grammar. Not that the teacher didn't give them enough practice in grammar for he usually instructed them in parsing and analysis for one hour every day. But fourth-class work was much harder than third-class work, and they now had lists of Greek and Latin words to learn off by heart.

He was able to remember the derivation and the meaning of siege, sincere, Polynesia and aspect, but he forgot the origin of three words — soluble, mandate and pyrotechnic. He had sometimes wondered what "pyrotechnic" really meant. When the inspector later gave back his paper, he found that he had spelt two words incorrectly in dictation. So he had to write them out a number of times — "permanently" and "descendants." He was fortunate when he guessed the correct spelling of "movable." He wasn't sure whether there were one or two e's in that word.

WHEN the clock on the wall showed 11 o'clock they were allowed out into the schoolyard for 20 minutes. It wasn't very much fun in the playground. The land was only 66ft. by 99ft. and there was practically no room to play. The school building held 170 pupils, there were three large water tanks, the toilets and a weathershed occupied a lot of space, and

the area toward the back of the playground was out of bounds because that was the teacher's residence.

Victor had heard his father say that the small playing area was a disgrace to the Church of England, but his mother had answered that the church was not to blame. Apparently the Government paid the teacher's salary, but did not aid the church in providing school buildings. His mother argued that it was very unfair to spend so much money on public schools and to let the church schools do without. She sometimes went to Christ Church meetings at the Cathedral, and said that it was very difficult

Ninth article in a series on early Newcastle school history by

EDDIE BRAGGETT

to raise money for denominational schools in Newcastle. Some of the Church of England schools at Wallsend, Lambton, and St. John's in Darby-street would have to close if the Government did not give more money.

On the other hand, Victor's father said that Roman Catholic Schools had started at Lambton in 1875 and at Hamilton a few months ago. In addition a new Roman Catholic school was to be started at the Junction the next year, 1877. The Roman Catholic Church was the only one which seemed able to provide the finance for new school buildings in the Newcastle area.

WHEN the pupils went back into school, the examination was resumed. This time they were given questions on geometry and algebra. The children in fourth class were doing work which today is included in the second and third forms of the high school course. And so the inspection continued in reading, writing, geography and drawing, till finally the teacher began a singing lesson.

The class liked to sing. Mr. Peak was the organist at Christ Church Cathedral, and he was able to teach singing so well that the morning paper — called the "Newcastle Chronicle" — sometimes commented on the children's singing ability. Some years back the teacher had held a concert in Newcastle at which the pupils of the school had given a number of choral items, and this had proved so popular that the concert had become an annual event. The town hall was filled when the Christ Church school put on these evening performances under Mr. Peak's direction.

After the singing lesson, the inspector wrote something in his book and smiled. Mr. Dwyer then congratulated the class on the good work they were doing, and said he would come back and inspect them again at a later date. He did not have to give the teacher any prior notice of his coming.

It was usual for the Christ Church Anglican School, the Newcastle Roman Catholic School, and the Newcastle Public School all to receive pleasing inspection reports in the 1870's.

At 4 o'clock the school was dismissed and the children went home. Most of them lived close to the school, but a few had to walk along the waterfront to Wickham.

VICTOR lived in Pacific-street near the hospital. He walked down to Hunter-street, and when he came to the site of the present T. & G. building he walked through a little gate and ran along the track to his home. Hunter-street was

not constructed past Watt-street.

The area between the hospital and what is now the 'bus terminus near the Newcastle Ocean Baths had once been covered with vegetation. When the gaol had been constructed in this region in 1818, all the vegetation had been removed so that any escaping prisoners would have no cover. Now 60 years later, the sand was still a problem for it blew into the city and piled up against the buildings.

Some of the older people spoke of the time when so much sand banked up against a two-storied house that it finally collapsed. On windy days the sand was unpleasant, and even caused damage to some of the new machinery in the shops.

The children played on the sandhills after school, and one of their favourite pastimes was to slide down the embankment from the sand dunes to the flat ground around the present power station.

THERE had been many attempts to get grass to grow in this area, and it was only in the last year or two that any success had been achieved. Trains were bringing loads of small coal to Newcastle and the coal was being spread over the region. Much of the sand was being removed and used to fill in the shores of the harbour. Brush fences were being erected to stop the sand moving so much.

So the movement of the sand was slowly being checked, and the grass was beginning to grow. A few people had already bought blocks of land on the sandhills, and the council was thinking of extending Scott-

street from the railway station to Fort Scratchley.

Before long the sandhills area was to be a thickly populated area. Land values jumped, and it was not long before the people of Newcastle referred to the Sandhills as a very fashionable living area. Terraces were constructed and, according to the old files of the "Newcastle Morning Herald," there were a number of "substantial villa residences." Early in the 1880's there was hardly an unoccupied block of land remaining.

It was in this region that a petition was organised in 1882. The people heard that the Government intended to stop all financial assistance to church schools at the end of the year. If this occurred, Christ Church Anglican School would close, and the children would have to walk to the Newcastle Public School on The Hill, or to the Roman Catholic School nearby.

WHEN the Dean of Newcastle realised this he suggested that the parents of the children at the school sign a petition, asking the Government to buy the Christ Church building in Bolton-street, and to convert it to a public school. Victor's parents were among the 107 who signed the petition and presented it to the Government.

After considering the proposal the Department of Public Instruction decided to purchase the school and the land for £2000, and when the children returned after the two weeks' Christmas vacation they found that a new teacher had arrived and that the school was now a Public School.

The State buys a Church school



Sketch of Christ Church Anglican School, on the corner of Church and Bolton Streets, in the 1870's. It is reproduced from the original etchings by Margaret May.

"HERE IT COMES!"

The word spread quickly that the train was coming, and the crowd on Waratah Station pushed forward to get a better view.

Some who had been waiting for more than two hours were rewarded by being close to the front.

It was a big day at Waratah in 1868, and an official holiday had been taken by most of the inhabitants. People from the neighbouring villages of George Town, North Waratah (Mayfield), and Charles-town were also present.

Amidst much noise and soot the train pulled into the station as the crowd cheered lustily and the engine-driver blew the whistle. Four men moved quickly towards the official carriage and placed a red carpet on the dusty platform, which had been swept half an hour before.

Mr. Henry Parkes alighted and was introduced to the more important people. Then, at a given signal, the band began to play. For some moments there was disorganisation as the crowd wondered what to do. Mr. Robert Turton came to the rescue by taking Mr. Parkes by the arm and leading him through the crowd.

Procession

The little procession moved off down the ramp. The brass band went first, the official party followed, and the crowd came at the rear. They headed towards the school.

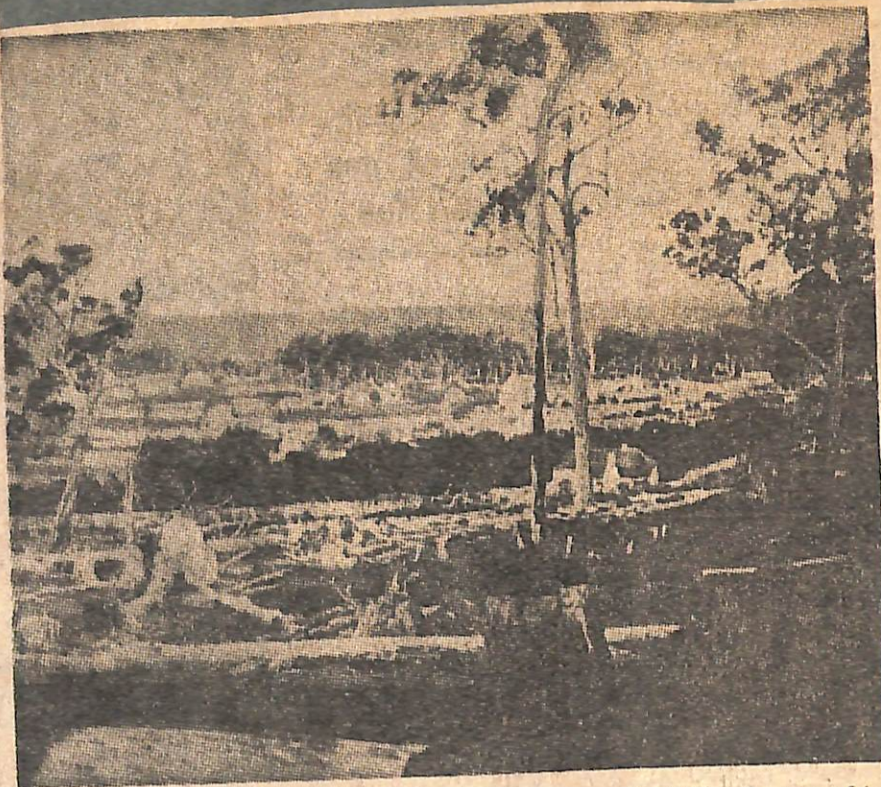
As they walked along Mr. Parkes talked to Mr. A. Tighe, the local Member of Parliament. It had been Mr. Tighe who had presented the original petition, with 175 signatures attached, to Mr. Parkes asking him to lay the foundation stone of the new school.

The streets were very dusty and most of the people were soon covered with dust. It took about 10 minutes to walk up the hill. On the way they went along Station-street, the main track in the township. Then they cut across open paddocks to a spot which is to-day about 150 yards up the rise from Newcastle Boys' High School at Waratah.

The schoolchildren were lined up, and their teacher, Mr. Isaac Archibald was standing near them to make sure they did not talk or get out of line. He was introduced to Mr. Parkes and everyone cheered.

The school inspector told Mr. Parkes that he was welcome. In reply Mr. Parkes told the 1000 people there that he "was 'appy to be 'ere to-day." Most of the children began to giggle, for they had not expected him to drop his aitches, most of the youngsters did not realise that Mr. Parkes was a self-educated man. The teacher had to look at the class sternly before they settled down again.

The adults seemed to enjoy the speech, for they often cheered or shouted "hear, hear!" The children joined in also, though they did not understand all that was being said. They had been told, however, that the rough little wooden building that had served them as a school for three years was to be replaced by a large brick structure, and



by EDDIE BRAGGETT

This is the 10th of a series of 12 articles on the early days of Newcastle, and particularly the beginnings of education in the area.

The ninth article in the series appeared on Saturday.

that Mr. Parkes was present to lay the foundation stone.

Those at the back of the crowd could not hear very well, and were content to sit on the grass and to gaze out over the village. It was only money collected in fees was kept by the teacher.

Mr. Archibald was permitted to be quite friendly with a small place with fewer than 1000 inhabitants. Some of them worked at Mr. Turton's brickyard and pottery, which may still be seen to-day in Turton-road. Bricks for the new school were supplied from these works.

Most of the men were miners employed by the Waratah Coal Co. at its big colliery, which was soon to produce 250,000 tons of coal a year. Nearby were extensive stone quarries owned by the Government. The stone was sent by train to Newcastle, where it was used to strengthen the breakwater and to extend it out past Nobbys.

A few shops and hotels were scattered along Station-street. The roughly constructed houses belonging to the miners were on the flat area near the town and on the rise. In wet weather the surrounding areas became marshy and the tracks became almost impassable.

Churches

Two churches had been built but these were well away from the marshes.

After the ceremony was finished and most of the people had started to move off, the official guests were entertained. At the same time, many of the children romped around and talked excitedly about the new school and when it would be opened.

For the next five months the local inhabitants watched as the foundations were dug, as the foundations were dug, the roof was pitched. Early in July, 1868, a crowd of 300 people sat down to a public tea to celebrate the opening of the new building. It cost

£1500 to construct. The Government contributed £1200 and the Waratah Coal Co. gave £100.

It was the teacher's task to work with the Local Board to try to raise the remaining £200. The area was canvassed for money, and donations were sought from business houses. A railway excursion to Singleton was held and people paid a high price for their tickets so that a considerable profit could go to the school funds.

Musical evenings were held. The children from the school gave concerts under the direction of the teacher and his assistants. The debt was paid off within two years, a very short time in comparison with other schools' efforts in Newcastle.

Career

Mr. Archibald was well liked as a teacher at Waratah. His career had been very interesting, though it had not been easy. He began teaching while still in his teens as a pupilteacher. This meant that he served as an apprentice and worked with a well-trained teacher.

Isaac Archibald could still remember his first year of teaching very vividly. He was paid a salary of £30 for the year. He arrived at school at 8.45 each morning and did playground duty for half an hour before going to the classroom and making sure that everything was ready for the day.

He taught from 9.30 till 11, and 11.15 till 12.30. After additional playground duty at lunchtime, he taught again from 2 o'clock till 4. After school each afternoon, his old teacher took him and the other pupilteachers and instructed them for one hour in English grammar, geography, Latin and mathematics.

Isaac Archibald was told to be grateful for this training after school for it was part of his remuneration. It also meant long hours of homework each night. The young lad often wondered whether

● Waratah township in 1866. The fence to the left of the cottage in the foreground is facing Bridge-street.

a school teacher's life was really worthwhile.

For four years he was trained as a pupilteacher. In that time his annual salary rose from £30 to £48. He then went to Sydney for one month to be trained at Fort-street School, which to-day still stands, close to the Harbour-Bridge.

As a young man he received promotion. Now, as a teacher in charge of a school, he was paid £108 a year. But he received money from the children also. Each Monday morning he made them line up near his desk and pay their weekly fee of 6d. each. The inspector allowed a slight reduction if more than one child attended school from the same family. All the same, his inspector, but still feared the power he possessed. In 1867 Mr. Allpass wrote that

the discipline at the school was lax, and as a result, Mr. Archibald was required to work hard for the rest of the year to make his teaching more effective and more interesting. The old buildings had not helped much, either. He was very thankful, therefore, when the inspector wrote in 1868 that the teaching had improved.

It was a pity Mr. Allpass did not inform the school-teachers when he would be visiting them. If they had known in advance, they could have prepared their lessons especially for him, but when they were not informed, their lessons were often more informal and sometimes unprepared.

There was very little activity at Waratah after work each day. The Editor of a Newcastle newspaper commented on the "immense numbers of youths who are disengaged after 6 o'clock in the evening, and who, unhappily, waste the remainder of each night in desultory habits."

At night

To help overcome this problem and to provide himself with another source of income as well, Mr. Archibald opened a night school for the boys of Waratah and for a small fee gave lessons between 7 and 9 o'clock on two nights a week.

Sometimes these lessons were given in his own home in the school grounds. This residence was provided for him by the education authorities. It was the usual practice to build these vested-residences in the 1860's and 1870's.

The year 1868 was very heavy for Mr. Archibald and he was glad when December arrived. School vacations were: A fortnight at Christmas, a week at Easter and a week at mid-winter. People did not enter the teaching profession because of the long holidays.

By the end of 1869 Mr. Archibald was notified of his move to Coorumbung and the people of Waratah were genuinely sorry to see him leave. In his three years at the township he had become well known among the residents and popular with the children.

The old school opened by Mr. Parkes became a landmark in the district and the teacher's residence, constructed for Mr. Archibald, is still in existence to-day.

STONNE LAYING AT SCHOOL

'appy day for Henry Parkes and Waratah

Worries of early school inspector

Minmi was a bustling township of 1200 people. The dusty streets echoed to the shouts of the miners on Friday afternoon after they had been paid.

A group of men pushed open the swinging doors of the hotel and joined their mates who leaned on the bar counter and talked earnestly.

It was usual for them to get together on a Friday afternoon and to tell their problems to one another. And it seemed that their problems were increasing in the late 1870's.

The people were grumbling, and at times it appeared fights would break out. Even the schoolteachers complained that it was impossible to live in the town.

To investigate these complaints, Mr. Maynard, the school inspector, rode through the streets on horseback and headed towards the school on top of the hill.

He saw a well-populated township with many newly-constructed houses lining the rough streets. Some of the homes were built of stone or brick and appeared very substantial.

Good shopping

Shops opened on to the footpath. One could buy a wide range of goods in Minmi without going back along the winding track to Wallsend where bigger shops provided for most of the special needs of the people.

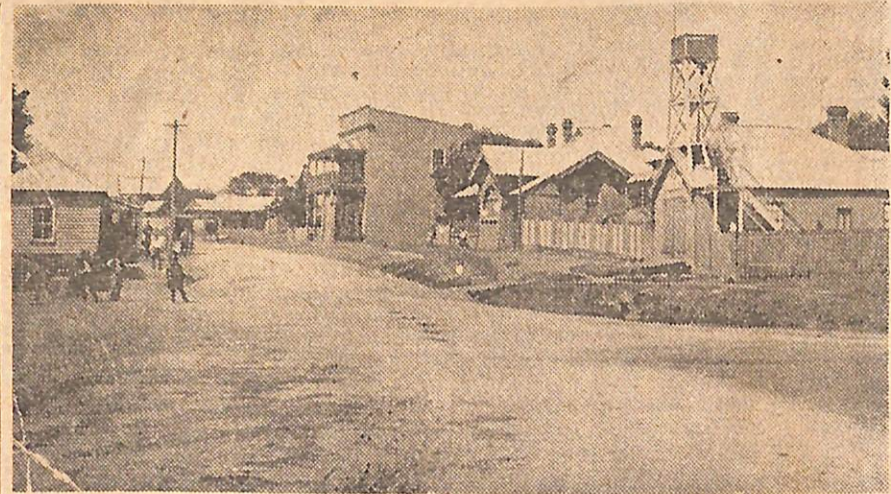
The post-office in the main street was a new stone building. A few doors away was the fire station with its high, wooden watchtower, from the top of which one could see most of the district.

The fire station and the tower have gone to-day, but the attractive little post-office is still operating. Three churches provided for the spiritual needs of the miners.

Mr. Maynard was appointed inspector in Newcastle in 1877, and did not know very much about the Minmi area. He made inquiries and found that a public school was begun in 1861 on a site donated by J. and A. Brown, the proprietors of the coalmine.

More than 80 children attended that year.

Since then the population had risen as the mine had increased production. By 1876 more than 150 children were crowded into the small school,



Minmi in the 1890's. The stone post-office in the centre of the picture still stands to-day.

and a tent had to be erected to provide for the overflow.

When this had proved inadequate the education authorities rented the Methodist Church for 3/4 a week. For two years more than 180 children attended.

A new school was opened in 1878 to accommodate 200 pupils. This was soon filled to capacity and an infants' department had been started. This building had just been completed in 1879, and as Mr. Maynard rode past the school, he thought how imposing the classroom looked.

He had been interested to know that William Charles Wentworth visited Minmi in 1863, and liked the settlement so much that he gave £50 to-

by Eddie Braggett

This is the second last of a series of 12 articles on early Newcastle, with the emphasis on the development of education.

The 10th article appeared on Monday.

The final article, on Saturday, will discuss the inspector's visit to schools in the inner suburbs of Newcastle.

wards the cost of the school. This helped the inhabitants pay for the original building.

The inspector spoke with the headmaster, Mr. Ling, then rode back 50 yards to the large home of the colliery proprietor. It was a very serious conversation that the two held, for Mr. Brown explained to Mr. Maynard why there was so much unrest in the district.

Practically every family at Minmi depended directly on the mine for a living, but unfortunately the colliery did not have a regular market for its coal. When an order was received the miners went into the pit and hewed the quantity required. When no orders were received there was no work, therefore no pay for the men.

Pit work slack

Mr. Brown assured the inspector that for the past three months there had been work at the pit on only 14 days. This meant no family had had more than an average of one day's pay a week. Some had not even had this. Families were destitute, with no money, goods, or credit.

According to the proprietor things were likely to become worse in the future, and even if the miners moved to other coalmining districts around Newcastle the position was very similar to that at Minmi.

It was for this reason that the children's parents could not afford to pay school fees to the teachers, who in turn

did not get sufficient money on which to live.

It was all very sad, and Mr. Maynard's report to the authorities in Sydney reflected some of the heartaches experienced by the working people. The inspector was very thoughtful as he mounted his horse and jogged off towards Wallsend.

The road was poor, and though it was very sandy in parts it was almost impassable in some sections. Twice Mr. Maynard left the track and worked his way through the scrub to avoid the quagmire.

On reaching Wallsend he called at the school at almost 4 p.m. He wanted to know what Mr. Walsh, the school teacher, was doing to improve the attendance.

No compulsion

About one-third of the children at Wallsend and Plattsburg did not attend school and, because schooling was not compulsory, the parents could not be fined. A new bill had just been introduced in Parliament to make attendance compulsory. This would be a blessing to the district if it were passed.

It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Maynard set off for Newcastle. It was raining and the roads became very slippery, especially near Dark Creek (Jesmond). This was a little settlement that was growing quickly. Mr. Maynard had refused a number of times to recommend a school in this area, but he knew he would have to give his permission before long. It was too far for the children to walk to Lambton or Plattsburg.

Next day it was still raining heavily, but this did not stop the inspector from leaving his home in Newcastle at 8 o'clock and setting off for New Lambton. As he descended Cameron's Hill, near St. Peter's Church of England at Hamilton, and came towards the Broad Meadows, his horse slipped and almost fell. There had been numerous letters to the newspaper about the shocking condition of this road in wet weather.

As he went over the Broadmeadow Bridge, he could see the marshy land along Broadmeadow-road was beginning to flood. He hoped he could get back in the afternoon. Once before he had had to spend the night in the suburbs because of the floods around this area.

School in gully

As his horse plodded through the mud, Mr. Maynard thought of the Lambton Public School, which was built in a gully. It was in the worst possible area of Lambton, in his opinion, but because the colliery manager had donated the site nothing could be done to move the school to higher ground. He knew water up to a foot deep would now be ly-

ing around the school, and that he would soon have to sanction costly drainage works.

Arriving at New Lambton, the inspector headed for the school. He had seen this suburb grow considerably in the past two years. More than 1500 people were living in the area. Several shops, six hotels, and two churches had been built not far from the mine, which employed about 500 men.

There had been agitation for eight years to have a school built in this region, but many obstacles had prevented anything from being done at the time for the 300 children who lived in the suburb. First, a site could not be procured, then legal difficulties had prevented the use of a block of land given by the colliery. Finally, in 1878, a site on the Commons was made available for a school, but further difficulties hampered the construction of the building.

The inspector now saw with pleasure that the building, costing over £4000, was well advanced. He estimated that it would open in February or March, 1880. He visited some of the local inhabitants, who were members of a School Committee, and talked over the plans for the official opening of the building in a few months.

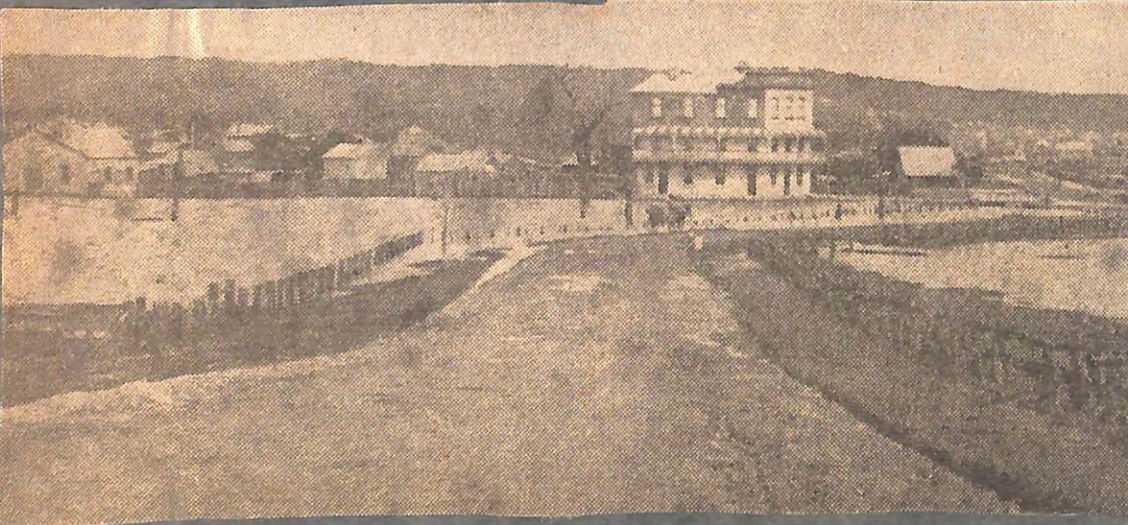
Hamilton prospers

Avoiding offers of cups of tea, he was pushing through the mud once again by lunch-time, and was heading towards Hamilton. This was a little suburb that was beginning to acquire a prosperous look. The Castlemaine Brewery, near the present Newcastle Cooperative Store, was the largest brewery outside of Sydney. The Newcastle Gas Company was buying land on which to erect a gasometer, and there was talk of lighting the streets of the municipality next year.

The school was well situated at Hamilton and the inspector was very happy with the teacher's work. He had been pleased to know that some of the children had become borrowers at the large library connected to the Mechanics' Institute in Beaumont-street.

After having put up with very poor roads in the outlying areas of Newcastle, it was a pleasure for Mr. Maynard to be back at Hamilton. The condition of the roads was good here, and it was not often that one saw a fully-laden buggy bogged in the mud in Tudor-street between the Hamilton shops and the Newcastle city. He wondered how long it would be before the road from Hamilton to Wallsend would be in the same condition.

An early view of Broadmeadow from the bridge, looking towards New Lambton. Floodwater covers the area.



For some time the track to the Junction had been used as a speedway, but now such races were held even in Blane-street itself. They were not planned of course. One bus would be moving quietly towards the western part of the city and another vehicle would draw level, whereupon one driver would yell to the other, "Race ya to the turn-off."

A nod of the head, a flick of the reins, a shout of "gid-up" and the race would be on down what is now Hunter-street between the Newcastle West Post-office and the Bank Corner. Sometimes one would brake suddenly if there were passengers waiting near Honeysuckle, but if not they both continued past the Roman Catholic Cemetery—now the site of Young and Green—till they came to the turn off at Hannell-street.

Passengers became alarmed and letters were addressed to the editor of the paper complaining of the "hooligan drivers" who did not care about the safety of others.

IT WAS an even bigger problem, however, between Lambton and Wallsend, where the races were up to two miles long. There had been accidents on this stretch, and one bus had overturned, injuring some of the passengers. Drivers on this route were called larrikins.

After the buses had passed him in Blane-street and the dust had begun to settle, Mr. Maynard, the school inspector, rode his horse off the footpath and then turned the corner into Hannell-street. As he crossed the railway line and headed into Wickham he wondered what could be done to prevent young people from acting so wildly. After all, the drivers of those buses were sometimes only 15 or 16 years of age. Perhaps it would be better if they were forced to stay at school. Schooling was not compulsory in 1879, and no more than two-thirds of the children under 12 attended a public or church school in Newcastle or the suburbs.

The inspector remembered that the Wickham School had been opened for only 12 months. The year before 500 people had attended a big concert to raise funds for the school, and many still spoke of it as one of the best evenings that had been put on in Wickham.

Actually the inhabitants had experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining a school. A strong move had been made between 1871 and 1873 by the Mayor of Wickham (James Hannell) but nothing had resulted, and it was only in 1877 that plans had been drawn up. Even then they had to threaten action, and at one stage it had been proposed to take the matter before the Legislative Assembly in Sydney.

Maynard wondered why the children came to school so irregularly, and left for good as early as they did at Wickham. When he checked up he found that most of them were working at an early age. Some stayed at home and helped their parents in the gardens and with the milking of the cows.

The slaughteryards near Throsby Creek employed some of the boys. Well over 5000 head of cattle and more than 50,000 sheep were killed each year to supply the city's meat and to provide for ships that visited the harbour.

ON THE waterfront, across the road from the school, were the soap works, which sent most of its produce to Sydney. When the new machinery was installed and it was planned to increase production in the 1870's, boys from the Wickham School were employed, especially after the works began to export to England.

Others worked at Redman's cordial factory, at Rodgers' foundry, or at Jewell's wool-washing sheds. In addition a number of stores and several bakeries employed young people at 12 years. It was expected that the Wickham coal-mine would soon need labour also, for a very valuable seam of good coal had just been discovered on the estates of

Mrs. Hannell and Mr. Fleming.

The Headmaster of the school, Mr. Pearson, told the inspector that the sawmills on the waterfront employed some of the boys. The timber, brought to these mills in rafts, was raised out of the water on a tramway and cut by 15 saws worked by a very powerful engine.

But it was the Hunter River Copper Works and the Torrens Tin Smelting Works which took most of the young boys when they left school at an early age. These industries were situated near the water

THIS is the final article in a series of 12 related to early Newcastle and particularly the beginnings of education in the area.

Photographs in the series have been reproduced from copies in the Newcastle Public Library.

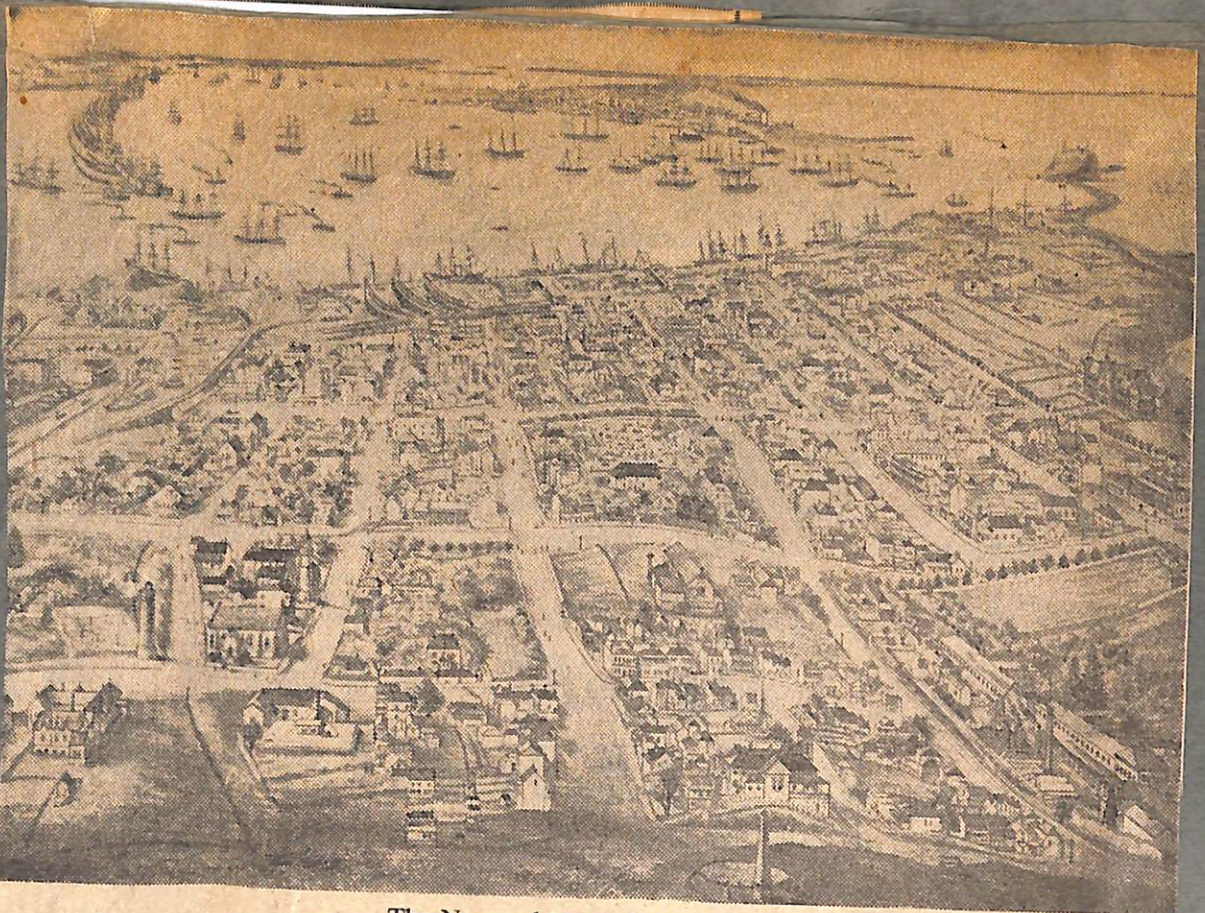
at Port Waratah, and several hundred people were employed at the works in shifts. Twenty-seven furnaces produced over 20,000 tons of copper ore and tin each year

SHIPS from Adelaide moored at the end of the jetty and the ore was poured into railway trucks which conveyed the ore direct to the furnaces. In a similar way a railway line connected the Smelting Works to the Waratah coalmines. An engine pulled the coal trucks to the works, and they were shunted along a viaduct till they were opposite the furnaces. A pin was knocked out of each coal truck and the coal emptied a few yards from the mouth of the furnace.

When jobs were available for children at such an early age, there was little incentive to attend school for long. The same story was repeated all over Newcastle. Under 70 per cent. of the children attended school, and most of these left at the age of 11 or 12. Sometimes their parents could not afford to keep them at school any longer, but frequently the parents saw no need for the youngsters to attend after they could read and write.

Having completed this survey with the headmaster's help, Maynard set off for Carrington. He recrossed the railway line and rode up Blane-street till he came to the area near the present intersection of Hunter and Union Streets. Here he crossed the railway line once again, and rode over the long bridge to Carrington, a suburb which was sometimes called Bullock Island or Oneby-gamba. The bridge was a wooden structure and rose some height above the water level.

Carrington was growing in importance. A small school had been opened in 1872 and this had been replaced by a public school for 30 children in 1873. But by 1879 a new school for more than 200 children was opened, and Maynard arrived at the place to take part at the official opening. Being Newcastle's Inspector, he was naturally asked to speak. The school was well situated, facing the main street which ran through the centre of the island and joined up with the bridge.



The Newcastle scene in 1889.

'Hooligan drivers' of Hunter street

A SULKY hastily pulled to the side of the road and a man on horseback spurred his horse up onto the footpath in Blane-street (Hunter-street West) to avoid the galloping horses. Amid clouds of dust, two horsedrawn 'buses thundered past as the drivers cracked their whips and battled to see which 'bus would win.

By EDDIE BRAGGETT

WHEN Maynard arrived home he sat down and wrote a long report of the day's activities. He disliked this part of the work because it took up so much of his time. On one occasion he had worked out that he spent about 90 days each year in clerical work and another 20 days examining teachers. Inspecting schools accounted for only half of his time.

The following day he set off for the Junction, where he intended to inspect the school. He spoke briefly to the headmaster when he arrived and then went to each class and

set them an examination. Pulling a piece of paper from a folder he wrote the questions on the blackboard.

SECOND CLASS TEST

1. Add 7010015 and 1076.
2. Subtract 908909 from 50831427.
3. Multiply 3792144387 by 87.

THIRD CLASS TEST

1. Add 380000011 and 90017.
2. Multiply 376985743 by 70809.
3. I bought 17 hats at 3s 2d each and 205½ yards of calico at 5½d per yard. I paid £5/18/5 on account. What do I still owe?

The children were examined in all subjects and the inspector came back the following day to complete the big task. Mr. Maynard did not miss very much in his scrutiny. He examined the buildings, the sheds, the teacher's residence and the site itself. He tested the fence to see whether it was rotten as a result of the floods which sometimes occurred at the Junction. Desks, blackboards, maps, charts, slates and books were all inspected and each teacher was observed as he taught.

His long report to Sydney was almost due and when he reached home at 4.30 p.m. he wrote a small section of it. There had been a tremendous expansion of education in Newcastle and he tried to give this impression in his report.

OF COURSE he knew little, if anything, about

the first school in Newcastle in 1816 when 17 children attended a hut near Bolton-street. But in 1879 he was able to write that more than 5000 children were attending schools in Newcastle and the suburbs. The way had been paved for the expansion of primary schools after 1880 and for the development of high schools after 1906.

When he finally finished his report a few weeks later Mr. Maynard wrote: "There is but little scope for the establishment of entirely new schools, for nearly every small centre of population has already a school of some kind. For some years to come building expenditure will be needed, not to open up to any extent new ground, but to make existing accommodation more perfect."

Child art display



From left to right, Margaret Laver, Elizabeth Henniker and Annette Tracy admire samples of children's art at the international display at Kotara Fair.

The three 12-year-olds all come from Birmingham Gardens and all attend St. Joseph's School, Merewether.

The collection of child art was originally assembled for the 150th anni-

versary celebrations at Newcastle East Public School.

It contains samples of work by children of 65 schools in 35 countries.

The display, which opened today, will continue until noon on Saturday.



BY PUBLIC DEMAND!

*The International
Art Display
by the children
of the World*

**COMM. TOMORROW UNTIL SAT. AT
KOTARA FAIR**

To celebrate the Newcastle East Public School's 150th Anniversary, the merchants of Kotara Fair have much pleasure in presenting this magnificent display of art by school children of 65 schools from 35 countries.

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THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL LEARNED WITH MUCH INTEREST THAT YOUR
SCHOOL IS CELEBRATING THIS WEEK ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY STOP
HIS EXCELLENCY SENDS TO YOU YOUR STAFF AND ALL YOUR PUPILS
HIS GOOD WISHES AND WARM CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS
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WE CONGRATULATE AND WISH YOU SUCCESS ON THIS 150TH
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Memorable day



Yesterday was a time of mixed feelings for two women at Newcastle schools — one who came from Sydney to visit the classroom in which she sat in 1878, and another who was retiring as an infants' school headmistress.

These pictures show them with children who shared the memorable day with them.

ABOVE: Mrs. Amy Rutledge, 93, came from Sydney to attend Newcastle East Public School's 150th anniversary commemorations. Here she chats with shy little Jacqueline Ford, 5, one of the youngest girls attending the school. Mrs. Rutledge first attended the school in 1878.

Don't miss this exciting informative exhibition

KOTARA FAIR

TUES., 24th to NOON, SAT., 28th MAY

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CONGRATULATIONS THINKING OF YOU ON THIS MEMORABLE DAY
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BEST WISHES FOR YOUR CELEBRATIONS FROM ALL AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR RED CROSS MELBOURNE

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NEWS RELEASES



PRESS RADIO TELEVISION

May 5, 1966.

P.R. 66/25.

SESQUI - CENTENARY OF NEWCASTLE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Newcastle East Public School will celebrate its Sesqui-Centenary on Wednesday, 11th May next.

This school commenced in 1816 and is the oldest in Australia. Its first teacher, Henry Wrensford, was a convict. It was visited by Commissioner Bigge who commented on the neat appearance and favourable progress of its pupils.

Governor Macquarie recorded that the school was "to be continued and patronised by every succeeding commandant".

Not only did the school remain in existence during the convict era but it has also had an unbroken history for the past 150 years and is the oldest school in Australia.

The Assistant Minister for Education, Hon. W.C. Fife, M.L.A., will unveil special plaques to mark the Sesqui-Centenary on May 11.

Mr. O.R. Jones, M.A., Director of Primary Education, will be the guest of honour at a Special Commemorative Dinner on May 10.

Children from 35 foreign countries will contribute to the celebration. They have forwarded samples of their art work, handcraft, needlework and projects and made special gifts. A German school has sent a special greeting on a tape recording.

This international display of the work of children of the world will be officially opened by the artist, William Dobell on May 11.

Two Papuan children will travel from Port Moresby to be special guests of the school during the celebrations. The Junior Red Cross and the school have provided the money for their fares.

A book outlining the history of this school during the past 150 years has been published as part of the Sesqui-Centenary celebrations.

Further information can be obtained from the Principal, Mr. Hall, telephone Newcastle B 2911.

* * * * *

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE TELEPHONE

20549 EXT 640 ⁵

PRESS OFFICER PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE N.S.W. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BOX 33 G.P.O. SYDNEY

AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE
TELEGRAM

T.G. 42. Sch. C 9671—11/64.



1 NEWCASTLE NSW

12

PRINCIPAL
SCHOOL 85
NEWCASTLE EAST NSW

APOLOGIES UNAVOIDABLE ABSENCE CONGRATULATIONS BEST WISHES

JUNCTION SCHOOL
MAGUIRE

CPD 1/37P KJ

• **Whose children?**

Sir: In Mr. Ed Braggett's history of the Bolton St. School he says that the first school was established for the benefit of the children of convicts quartered here.

I am seeking information, not in any way disparaging Mr. Braggett's work, by inquiring what evidence he has that there were any children of convicts in Newcastle during the time the area was used as a second offence convict compound.

The convicts were sent from Sydney to be punished and they were from all accounts given very slender rations and so far I have not found any mention elsewhere of their being allowed to take their wives and families with them.

In the list of names of children he gives as the original members of the school occurs several who were of the same family, and their father could have been a member of the military guard stationed here at the time.

Could Mr. Braggett say for sure that the first pupils were

convicts' children and that they were not, as would seem more probable, the children of the military and of other officials associated with the convicts?

—“First Fleeter” (City).

CONVICT SETTLEMENT

Facts on the children

Sir: “First Fleeter” seeks information on the children in the early convict settlement at Newcastle.

I refer him/her to page 11 of my book, “From Convict Times to Modern Era.”

Allowing for three different types of people, I there ask the question: “What of the children belonging to the military officers, the Civil Department, and the convicts?” All three types were to be found at Newcastle.

I leave the inquirer to consult “Historical Records of NSW.” Vol. V pp. 431, 471-2, 648-9 and 679. Many more references are to be found in the index under “Newcastle” in Vols. VI and VII. Further mention is made consistently throughout the Governors’ Despatches in “Historical Records of Australia,” Series I, Vols. VII and VIII.

These are all available in the Reference Section of the Newcastle Public Library.

For example, in 1810 Governor Macquarie reported to Viscount Castlereagh in London that there were 100 people at Newcastle, 12 of whom were children under 10 years of age. Of these, seven belonged to the “prisoners.”

In November, 1814, there were three children connected with the Civil Department, none with the Military, five with free settlers and 18 with the prisoners. (Hist. Rec. of Aust., Vol. VIII pp. 599-600). We know enough about the convicts at Newcastle to realise that there were probably a number of illegitimate off-spring as well.

When the school was commenced at the settlement in 1816, Governor Macquarie wrote: “There being a considerable number of children at Newcastle belonging to the convicts now at the settlement, and the recent Com-mandant there having very laudably established a school for their education.” (Reference: Entry 29, NSW Col. Sec. In-Letters Bundle 10-12, Newcastle 1816-18, Mitchell Lib.).

Five of the youngsters who attended the school in May, 1816, were the children of William Eckford, the pilot.

On January 21, 1820, Eckford signed a declaration before Commissioner Bigge. He was asked, “How long have

you been a prisoner . . . ?” to which Eckford answered, “I was tried about six years ago before Judge Bent.”

(Reference: Appendix to Bigge Report, B.T. Box 1, p. 491, Mitchell Lib.).

The inquirer may feel free to contact me personally for further information.

—E. Braggett (Newcastle Teachers’ College).

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• **Convict children**

Sir: I have to thank Mr. Braggett for his detailed answer to my query about children of the early convicts in Newcastle. One can labor under a misapprehension for a long time and, therefore, one is all the more appreciative when the right man comes along and puts things right. Mr. Braggett has done a great deal to widen our knowledge of our history and, doubtless, will do a great deal more.

The history of education in the years subsequent to the Macquarie era is still rather dim to most people and I am sure that Mr. Braggett’s keenness and capacity for intensive research will throw more light on the period between Macquarie and the starting of the National Schools system many years later.

I think the field is wide open for many historians to deal more in detail with this period in all its aspects.

In Sydney particularly there seems to be a tendency to concentrate upon the era of the great early governor but what happened between the time that Macquarie left and the discoveries of gold is perhaps not such a blank period as may be suggested by the absence of authoritative researchers and writings available to the public.

What happened in the days of Darling, Brisbane, Burke Gipps is not generally known to the bulk of the public.

We know a good deal about the discoveries of gold and events of the period, but then again our history seems to be not well expressed and known from then onwards to the days of the moves for Federation.

I hope Mr. Braggett doesn’t think that the question asked by me was a move to discredit his fine history of the early days in relation to Bolton St. Public School. Far from it. We need more Ed Braggetts.

—“First Fleeter” (City).

"The Headmaster"

Bollon St School

14 Fitzroy St
Mafffield
3/5/66

Dear Sir

I think I might be one of the
oldest pupils of your School.
I was born on the "23rd June 1885"
I most likely would start School at
the age of 5 yrs, so that would make
it "1890 or 91" that I would start at
the School. My parents moved from
Pacific St to Look's Hill so I
naturally went to Look's Hill School
after that, up to the time I was
12 years old.

Yours Faithfully
Mr. V. Akerman

c/- Public School,
Kootingal.
3 - 5 - 66.

Dear Merv,

Firstly, on behalf of our Mothers' Club, P & C, staff and pupils, allow me to extend our hearty congratulations to you and your school on the achievement of its sesqui-centenary. As we believe Newcastle East is the oldest school in Australia you must be proud of the fact that your school set the foundation for education in one of the youngest countries in the world and has continued in this manner for one hundred and fifty years.

As our parents, children and school have been associated warmly with your school for some time now we felt it would be most appropriate if we could send some material acknowledgement of your celebration, not merely to say "congratulations" but as a friendly gesture from one school to another.

These opportunities are rare and their significance could not go unrecognised so we hope you find our gift one of value both in terms of friendship and to the children.

We hope your celebrations are successful internally and publicly. Perhaps we may see or hear something about the occasion on television as such an event is of historical significance.

Once again congratulations and all the best for your displays.

Kindest regards,

Louis Hayward.



SYDNEY.

16 MAY 1966

Dear Mr. Jenkins,

Following my visit on Wednesday, 11th May to participate in the Sesqui-Centennial Celebrations of the Newcastle East Public School I must compliment you on the manner in which you conducted this ceremony. The function was, in my opinion, a tremendous success and I was delighted to be associated with such an important and historic occasion.

Would you please pass on to the members of the Parents and Citizens' Association my thanks for the most valuable assistance rendered to the school.

Yours sincerely,

(Wal. C. Fife),
Assistant Minister for Education.

Mr. J. J. Jenkins,
President,
Newcastle East Public School
Parents & Citizens' Association,
Bolton Street,
NEWCASTLE.

Please address all communications to the
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NEWCASTLE AREA
P.O. BOX No. 666
NEWCASTLE



St 7386-1
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
88 SCOTT STREET
NEWCASTLE 12th May, 1966.

Important, in your reply, quote WAG: NW.
TELEPHONE No. 2 0481

Mr. J.J. Jenkins,
The President,
Newcastle East Parents and
Citizens' Association,
108 Church Street,
NEWCASTLE.


Dear Jim,

I would like to congratulate you and the members of your Association on the excellence of the Sesqui-Centenary Celebrations of the Newcastle East Public School. The organization and the functions themselves were of highest standard and most enjoyable.

I am sure these celebrations will do a great deal to stimulate education in the locality and to promote even greater co-operation between the school and the parents.

I consider myself privileged to have attended the functions arranged, and assure your members of my deep appreciation as well as my great enjoyment.

Yours sincerely,


W.A. GELFIUS,
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
NEWCASTLE AREA.

16 Rose Street,
MEREWETHER.

10th May, 1966.

Dear Mr. Jenkins,

I have just arrived home from the 150th Anniversary of Bolton St. School, and would like to say how much we all enjoyed it.

Congratulations to the Organisers, it was really a magnificent effort.

We enjoyed seeing our old classmates so much and would you please make it an annual effort.

I do not usually write letters of appreciation at this hour 10.30. in the p.m., but it was such a happy occasion I felt I just had to sit down and do this thing.

I must say that perhaps the Rheisling has something to do with it - but nevertheless the sentiments are sincere.

As an Ex-Student of Newcastle Girls' High School, may I pass on a suggestion which is carried out at our Annual Dinners, and that is; the year in which each person left is called, going right back to 1906, and by the time we reach the present year everyone is standing. At this stage the School is Toasted, and the School Song is sung, and believe me it is very moving.

Please forgive the errors in typing - but it was jolly good Rheisling - and once again thank you one and all for the really supreme effort.

Only those conversant with organising would appreciate the work involved.

Yours faithfully,
(Miss) Frances Robinson

Newcastle's oldest school gets help

Star

30/3/94

NEWCASTLE East Primary School may be down but it's not out.

At least not while Carrington Coal Company Pty Ltd is around.

Carrington Coal will become the patron of the school, the oldest in Newcastle, and hand over a donation to its principal, Mr Trevor Notley, on Thursday.

P&C spokesperson Mrs Anna Enno said the donation, which is likely to be between \$8000 and \$10,000, would be used to upgrade playground equipment and educational resources at the school.

Mrs Enno said the money would also be used to fund Japanese lessons.

Mrs Enno said the coal company decided said.

to come to the rescue of the school after hearing that it had three teachers and 75 pupils in composite classes.

Despite assurances by the Department of School Education that the school would not be close, parents were still concerned about its dwindling student population, Mrs Enno said.

Three members of the sixth grade committee for the Australian project locate Newcastle, Australia on a world map. Pictured are: (from left) Jim Clark, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marion Clark, 2301 Burnham st.; Mary Kay Roth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Roth, 4001 So. 20 st.; and Jim Hatheway, son of Mrs. Margie Hatheway, 2001 Burnham st.



Australian Exhibit to Have Works From Lincoln School

During the month of September Lincoln's Merle Beattie school received a very special letter from Newcastle, Australia. This posting told of how the Newcastle East public school would soon celebrate 150 years of continuous operation as a school. No other school in Australia can honestly make a similar claim.

The letter explained how the students in Newcastle wanted to have an international display in which the work of the children of the world could be exhibited. The letter from Australia said that the people of Newcastle felt that

this exhibit was a good way to stress education as the basis of knowledge and tolerance throughout the world.

The letter requested nothing special, but rather, it asked for exhibits indicative of the daily work in Merle Beattie school.

Merle Beattie students responded enthusiastically. From Evelyn Caldwell's sixth grade language and arts class a committee of six youngsters was formed to handle most of the arrangements.

Samples were carefully collected from groups ranging in ages from six to 12 years.

Handwork, art and samples of classroom work were prepared for the long voyage to the huge subcontinent of Australia.

All of the exhibits from Merle Beattie school now are ready to join the other 149 exhibits from around the world and become a part of an international display during the celebration of Newcastle East public school's 150 birthday.

This is one birthday party that always will be remembered in the hearts of the children at Merle Beattie school.



Members of the sixth grade committee review some of the work to be included in the exhibit that will represent Merle Beattie school at the international display in Newcastle, Australia. Pictured are: (from left) Robert Andelt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Andelt, 3264 So. 17 st.; Marshall Burling, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Burling, 3609 St. Marys ave.; and Bill Browne, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Browne, 2315 Marilyn ave.

