



John Fernance, 11, left, Glen Hughes, 12, and Annabel O'Neill in a scene depicting the Depression from the play written for Newcastle East Public School's 175th anniversary.

Memories flood back at school's 175th 'birthday'

MRS Minnie Vallin, 85, of Charlestown, fondly remembers the days when she wore to school bloomers made from recycled flour bags and wrote her lessons on slate.

These and other schoolyard memories came flooding to the surface for Mrs Vallin as she helped Newcastle East Public School celebrate its 175th anniversary at the weekend.

The president of the school's Parents and Citizens Association, Mrs Sherry Marks, said several hundred people helped mark the occasion, which also recognised the school as being the oldest in Australia providing continuous education.

Mrs Marks said the school's location had changed several times since its foundation in May, 1816, most recently moving to its present location in Tyrrell St from Bolton St in 1983.

Former students from as far away as Alice Springs and Melbourne joined in the celebrations, which included a reunion dinner at Newcastle City Hall on Friday night and an open day on Saturday featuring historic displays and photographs, a general fair and music by the Newcastle High School Band.

Mrs Marks said the highlight of the anniversary weekend was a play presented on Saturday by the students.

Written by teacher Mr Dick Kearney, the play was inspired by a series of interviews with former pupils concerning their memories of school life.



Amelia Hayes, 11, left, Sheree Morrison, 12, centre, and Madeleine Cavanagh, 10, ring the old school bell.