

THE SCHOOL BY THE LAKE

**A Record of the
Pleasant Street Primary School,
No. 695
1858 — 1978**

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and
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on whose historical notes this record is
largely based.*

Cover illustration by past student Wes. Walters

PROLOGUE

THE year was 1877, and in many parts of Ballarat, at Wendouree, Brown Hill, Queen Street and by the lake shore in Pleasant Street, bricklayers and masons were at work on the construction of new primary schools for the recently developed State School system. Writing later of the Education Act of 1872, which revolutionised the primary school administration of the colony, Ballarat historian, William Bramwell Withers, had this to say:

"As the great bulk of the children of Ballarat are sent to State Schools, these have become a notable feature in civic architecture, as they are necessarily numerous, and they mark the advent of a new school of architecture in the Public Works Department. In the olden days the State buildings of all kinds were, as a rule, hideous to the sight. The new State schools are sightly, and lend some really welcome aspects to the landscape."

Certainly those who assembled on Saturday morning, 1st September, 1877, for the official opening of the Pleasant Street State School, No. 695, were delighted with their new building. Designed to accommodate 420 children, it had an actual capacity of 450, sufficient to meet all the needs of the foreseeable future.

A description of the new school, contained in the Courier report of the occasion, stated: "It is of the usual modern Gothic style of architecture followed by the department, but although built rather too low, has a much lighter appearance than many of the State School structures."

In spite of some disagreement between the department and the local Board of Advice about arrangements for the opening, the occasion was a successful one. The chairman of the Board of Advice, Mr. Maconochie, opened the proceedings, in the presence of some 350 adults gathered in one of the new classrooms. The residents now had a good building, the children would be provided with good books, and with the excellent staff of teachers under Mr. Holding, it would be their own fault if the pupils did not progress, he said.

The Minister of Public Instruction, Mr. W. Collard-Smith, officially opened the school. His address included reference to a recently circulated instruction, which restricted to head teachers the right to administer corporal punishment to the children. No doubt this was good news to the pupils, as was the Minister's final statement. At the request of Mr. Maconochie he granted them a holiday on the following Monday.

ST. PETER'S SCHOOL*

THE small school which opened on 15th February, 1858, on the present site of the Pleasant Street Primary School was on the outskirts of the young but busy Ballarat. A straggle of scrubby gum trees lined the banks of the reedy, unnavigable swamp, and only a few lines of houses stretched out tentative arms from the bustling heart of the mining community away to the east.

In another sense, however, the new school was at the historical heart of Ballarat. It was here on the banks of the swamp which for years carried his name that Ballarat's first settler, William Cross Yuille, set up his camp twenty years before. Later generations of Pleasant Street pupils are familiar with the small granite cairn which stands at the side of Wendouree Parade, opposite the school. Presented by the Mayor of Ballarat, Cr. A. J. Darling, in 1934, it tells us that: "Near this spot was the camp of the first resident of Ballarat, William Cross Yuille, in 1838".

Known originally as St. Peter's School, Yuille's Swamp, the school was founded under the auspices of the Church of England. The first correspondence on record is a letter from the Rev. John Potter, of St. Peter's Church, applying to the Denominational Board for aid in establishing a Church of England school at Yuille's Swamp. His request obviously met with a favorable response, for the school opened in the following year. The report of the Denominational Board for 1858 stated that there were thirty-two children on the roll, with an average attendance of twenty-one during the year.

The first teacher was apparently Mrs. Catherine Williams, who directed the school for several months until her husband's appointment as head teacher on 1st July, 1858. Mr. Robert Williams, a native of Bristol, remained in this position until 1867, and later held other teaching appointments in Ballarat and at Mt. Macedon. He was the first head teacher of the Alfredton State School, which he opened in 1871. Mrs. Williams remained an assistant at Pleasant Street until that year, while one of their three sons, Robert, later editor of the Ballarat Courier, was a pupil teacher there from 1869 to 1874.

A grant from the Denominational Board, for which application was made in 1860, assisted in the building of the first official school house. Public subscriptions were also forthcoming, and by 15th May, 1851, Mr. Potter was able to forward to the Denominational Board a plan of the newly completed building. It was a weatherboard structure, measuring fifty feet by twenty-four feet, to which a lean-to

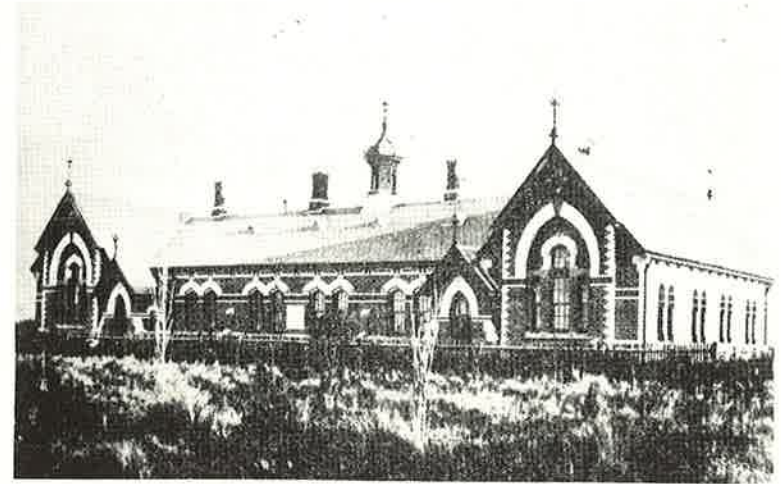


Photo from Victorian Department of Education Archives showing bell tower.



THE CAST, circa 1910

room measuring eighteen feet by twelve feet was added later as an infants' room. The building cost about £200, and was described by Mr. Potter as "the best and cheapest building of the kind I have ever seen". In retrospect, perhaps the most significant thing about the building was the identity of its architect, H. R. Caselli, whose reputation has long outlived the small school. The winner of a competition for a design for the Ballarat Town Hall, Mr. Caselli was also the architect of the Ballarat City Fire Brigade, and of several Ballarat and district churches, including the Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church at Sebastopol, the Learmonth Roman Catholic Church and Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Buninyong. All are lasting records of his ability and fame.

A subscription list for the new school, signed by Robert Monckton, honorary treasurer, on 14th May, 1861, gives the first indication of the precise location of the school property, which had a frontage of 243 feet to Pleasant Street, and was bounded on the north and west by a reservation belonging to the City Council.

By the following year the Denominational Board, which had materially assisted the foundation and building of St. Peter's School, no longer existed. Like the National Board it had been set up in 1848 in an effort to ensure the maintenance of some reasonable standards of education in the colony. One of the most severe critics of the system was James Bonwick, an English school teacher who became a sub-inspector of schools in the denominational system, and was appointed in 1857 to the Ballarat and Ararat districts. His account of his inspection tours through Western Victoria provides a fascinating insight into the widely varying school standards of his time.

Bonwick was concerned, in particular, about the plight of children on the smaller mining fields, and of the need for settled amenities and civilising influences such as were becoming part of the community life of Ballarat. He was also strongly opposed to the dual system of control, which he considered to be both wasteful and inefficient, and doubtless he contributed his views to the long controversy which preceded the establishment of a single Education Board in 1862, and the abolition of the Denominational and National Boards.

The new board administered the Common Schools Act, and was the body responsible for the overall governance of the small school in Pleasant Street during the next decade of its history. It was in 1863, under the Common Schools system, that Pleasant Street acquired its distinguishing number of 695, by which it is still known. In that year it

had an average attendance of thirty-five boys and twenty-six girls.

No doubt these Pleasant Street pupils of the 1860's watched with interest the developments then taking place which began the transformation of the nearby swamp into the Lake Wendouree of today. Perhaps they walked with their teachers to the water's edge to watch preparations for the first Ballarat Regatta, held on 6th May, 1864, and were present, in the following year, when the 'Victoria', first of a fleet of lake steam boats, was launched. The work of convicts from the Ballarat Gaol, who were marched daily to the lake to improve its surroundings, cutting down the scrub and planting elms, oaks and willows, must have been a source of fascination to the children.

The 1860's and 70's were a period of rapid development in the city. A strong sense of community responsibility had replaced the more transient character of the early gold rush days, and churches and public buildings were springing up in many parts of Ballarat. The year 1872 was a momentous one in the history of education in Victoria. The passing of the Education Act, which made the State responsible for the provision of free, secular and compulsory education, brought about the end of most of the small denominational schools which had previously been the mainstay of the education system. St. Peter's school, like so many others, was headed for change.

During 1873 the Education Department began negotiations with the Church of England trustees for the purchase of the school and site, and agreement was reached for a purchase price of £275. The purchase was completed early in 1874, and the school was recognised as a State School as from 1st January that year.

Looking back on these days, after an interval of nearly 40 years, an old scholar recalled that: "Our scholastic attainments were of the strenuous order, and many were the trials of our teachers to till the ground well enough to germinate the seed of the three R's. The ground work was laborious in the extreme to some of my fellow-scholars, especially in calligraphy. Many were the punishments on our digits, to some purpose; but still the knowledge imparted and received has enabled many of the scholars of the early days to take their place in successful walks of life.

"Moleskins were the fashion of school life of the 70's, for mothers could only keep their male offspring free from a sieve-like appearance under the covering of the mole. The perfume was not always of the choicest, but still a kind of freemasonry was existent amongst the wearers, though not exactly an ideal state of Socialism (which was evidenced

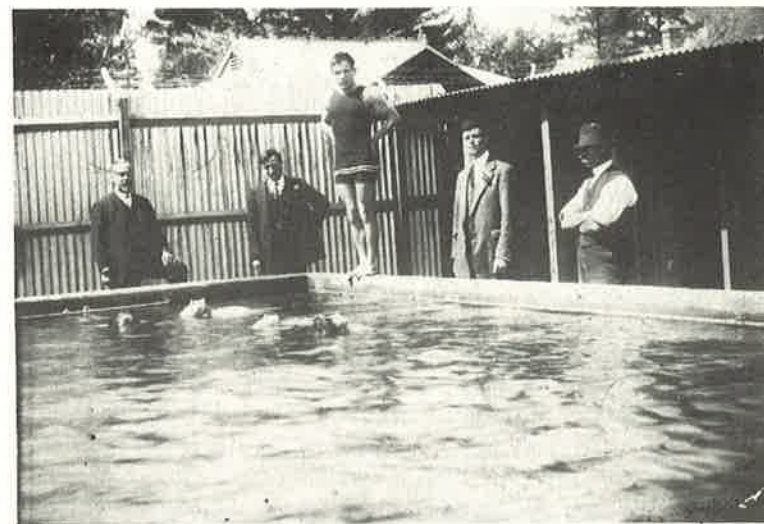
VICTORIA'S FIRST STATE SCHOOL SWIMMING POOL
 First used 20th October, 1913 — officially opened by Sir A. J. Peacock,
 Minister for Education, 8th November, 1913.



Steel framework to reinforce concrete walls.



THE DEEP END — DEPTH 4' 6"



Mr. F. Beaurepaire (later Sir Frank), government swimming and life-saving expert instructing swimming monitors in floating.



The first race in public, 8th November, 1913.

in the game of marbles). Some of us were decidedly Conservative in keeping as far as possible from the members of the 'moleskin brigade'.

"'Wagging it' was a common enough crime in the 70's, and many were the excursions (without permission) to the marine stores and lakeside and raids on the edible root crops of the Chinese gardens at the bottom of Pleasant Street. Nature study, which is so much a part of the present-day curriculum, was denied us, but I am sure the old boys and girls will have pleasant memories of the old trees and verdure of the Saxon Paddock (now the City Oval). The paddock was unfenced at the time written of, and it contained some beautiful specimens of the eucalyptus, and the environs of the lakeside, with the trees and shrubs then in their early infancy, were strikingly picturesque.

"Occasionally the school was visited by blacks (aborigines), whom I remember visiting under the trees in the Saxon Paddock, with their gins and once only a piccaninny.

"The V-shaped piece of land to the west of the school was securely fenced, with hawthorn and day roses as a hedge, and pine trees grew profusely. It was the delight of the boys to gain admission to this enclosure, sometimes at the cost of torn pants, to bird-nest and hunt the burrows of the rabbit; but all this is now changed, with most of the trees cut out, the fence taken away and the ground levelled!"

SECULAR EDUCATION

THE first head teacher under the State system was Thomas Holding, an officer of the Prince of Wales Light Horse, and strict disciplinarian, who had been appointed to the school in 1870, and remained for a long period of seventeen years. Most of the members of his staff had also served with him at the denominational school. They included assistants Jane Muir, Frederick Taylor and the head teacher's sister, Elizabeth Holding, and probationary teachers Robert Williams and Sarah Light. Another probationary teacher, Sarah Bailey, resigned at the end of 1873, or early in the following year, and her place was taken by Agnes Muir, while another assistant, William Coutts, was appointed in 1874.

By August, 1875, the average attendance had risen to 380, and the school was beset by accommodation problems. As a temporary solution, a Wesleyan building and St. Peter's Sunday School hall were rented to provide extra space, but it was obvious that the time had come for the building of a new school. Tenders were called in 1876 for the building of a school designed to accommodate 404 children. The

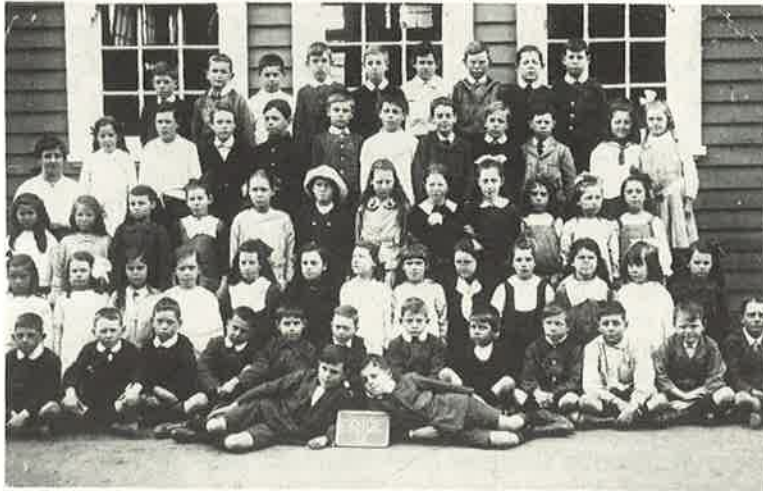
highest tender was of £3,020/3/9 and the lowest, which was accepted, was that of Llewellyn and Edwards, for £2,783/17/6. The school was completed by August, 1877. Gas was laid on to the building during the same year, a water supply having been connected some three years earlier.

Both old and new schools were crowded on to a site which bore little relation to the spacious school grounds of later years. Its total area was only three roods and thirty-six perches, in a roughly rectangular block extending about half way along Pleasant Street from Mair Street towards the lake, and a similar distance to the west. The old school stood close to the corner of Mair and Pleasant Streets, while the new school was built along the northern boundary.

The land between the school and the lake had been declared a Public Gardens Reserve on 7th July, 1873. After involved negotiations between the local council and the Education Department it was transferred to the Minister of Public Instruction by an Act of Parliament dated 14th November, 1878, effectively doubling the ground space available to the school. The City Council had sought £150 from the department for improvements to the reserve, but eventually accepted a payment of £75. In the same year the old buildings were sold for removal, and were bought by John McPhee for £25.

The large triangle of land on the western side of the school site, where later generations of boys kicked their footballs and played cricket, was still a Corporation Reserve, and remained so until 1908 when the school was given permission to occupy the land. The council retained thirty feet to reduce the angle at the intersection of Mair Street and Wendouree Parade. The total area of the school grounds was then at its maximum of 3.2 acres, and compared more than favourably with the sites of many of the primary schools built both then and later.

The spacious site and the secluded neighbourhood of the school were not, however, without disadvantages. Mr. Holding was the first of many headmasters to complain to the department of the cost of repairing broken windows, reputed to be the work of larrikins armed with shanghais. Even when the culprits were apprehended on one occasion, charged by police and found guilty, they had no resources with which to pay for the damage. A long correspondence followed before the Minister agreed, in the circumstances, to reimburse the head. An even more drastic form of vandalism occurred in 1889, when the toilets were partly burnt down, the fire being judged by police to have been started deliberately.



GRADE IV — 1913



GRADE I — 1913

There were other problems, too. In 1894 a complaint was made that damp was damaging the cadets' rifles, and a new and drier storage space was requested. This was perhaps the first of many complaints, extending over more than half a century, about drainage and allied difficulties. A "loathsome smell" which made itself known in 1895 under the gallery of the Infants Room was also attributed, incorrectly, to dampness. After long and and costly efforts to improve the situation, the trouble was found to be a leakage not of water, but of gas. The defective gas main was duly replaced at a cost of 7/6. A more costly problem arose in 1903 when substantial repairs had to be made to the foundations and walls. While this work was in progress, classes were held for three weeks at St. Peter's Sunday School.

Contentious issues between the Education Department and teaching staffs are by no means a phenomenon of the 1970's, as is evident from the school correspondence of the late 19th Century. Most early letters to the department were concerned with staffing difficulties, with numerous letters requesting the replacement of student teachers, or reporting teacher absences. From the absentees came letters requesting re-appointment. It appears that teachers frequently had difficulty in obtaining appointments commensurate with their classification and experience, and a new appointment or transfer sometimes meant a drop in salary.

Applications for leave without pay were not uncommon, and were given due consideration. Mr. Holding had a year's absence from Pleasant Street on this basis. Among the more trivial dictates of officialdom which have survived in the records was the account of a request from the head teacher for approval for an assistant on the staff to be given a gift by his class. The request was refused.

The new State School lost little time in expanding its activities. In 1878, at the request of the school committee, permission was given by the department for Robert Clarke, the senior male assistant, to conduct night classes. Twelve years later, in 1889, the Ballarat City Board of Advice gave approval to an application by the Rev. Dr. T. R. Cairns, of St. Andrew's Kirk, to conduct Sunday School classes at the school. Physical education was extended in 1890, when an instructor of military drill was appointed.

The school's staff, as listed in 1885, included Mr. Holding, Mr. Clarke, a junior assistant, Margaret Gallagher, and four probationary teachers, Ada Holder, Minnie Eyles, Thomas Coyle and Edward Roberts. Mr. Holding's long period as head teacher ended in 1887. His successors during the next twenty years included Edward Date, F. Corbett,

Joseph Austin (acting head), C. R. Smithwick, James McAllister and Moses Fardy. Between 1893 and 1905 the Alfredton school was an adjunct of Pleasant Street, and the Pleasant Street head teacher was responsible for both schools.

For Pleasant Street this was a period of consolidation and steady growth, during which the reputation of the school became firmly established. Already it was building up its own traditions, and the pupils of its earliest years were going out to take their place in the local community.

A NEW CENTURY

A study of the Pleasant Street rolls of the early years of the Twentieth Century shows the diversity of background and occupation of those who constituted the school families. The development of deep mining had brought experts and opportunists from many parts of Australia and from overseas to the Ballarat goldfields. This movement of population was a forerunner of the larger and more diverse population movement brought about by the immigration policies of the Government in the decade which followed the Second World War.

Families from Ireland, South Africa, Wales and other countries, and from the great Australian mining centres of Coolgardie, Charters Towers, Broken Hill, and, closer at hand, from Italian Gully, settled in Ballarat and enrolled their children at Pleasant Street.

The occupations of the parents also showed great variety and versatility, with emphasis on the skills relevant to the age, many of which have long since died out. There were clergymen, dentists, solicitors and sharebrokers, mine managers, metallurgists, mechanical engineers, battery managers, enginesmiths, masons, wheelwrights, coach builders, saddlers, blacksmiths, carriage-trimmers and coach painters, ironmoulders, leather merchants, piano tuners, motor chauffeurs and car repairers, cabmen, horse dealers, drovers and quarrymen, a publican and boat owner, a time-keeper and even an inventor.

The town area from which the pupils were drawn was substantially the same as at the present time, from the Central West area around Sturt Street, the 'Crimean' streets, Nightingale, Malakoff and Inkerman, from Webster and Mill Streets, Frank Street and as far north as Gnarr Street, and from the slowly growing settlement around the lake. To dwellers in the more populous areas of the eastern half of Ballarat, many of these streets, like the school itself, seemed still on the edge of civilisation.

Within the school, classes were large, discipline was firm, and the syllabus, while limited by present standards, was thoroughly and meticulously followed. Exercise books of the period reflect the importance attached to the basic subjects, arithmetic, grammar, composition, spelling, geography and history. The following succinct and original essay on Ants comes from a work book of 1908, each page of which is adorned, in red ink, with the worthy motto 'Labor Omnia Vincit'.

"There are many kinds of ants, but the ones I am going to speak of are the little black ants. They build their houses in the ground and are very peculiar in their ways. They take their baby ants out in the fresh air for a walk, they also have several little rooms in their house, and place the big baby ants in the top rooms and the smallest ones in the bottom room." Copy books also had an entrenched place in the school routine, and scratching pens laboriously copied injunctions to 'Look before you leap' and 'Be courteous to all'.

Here is an example of history in a nutshell: "Captain Cook was an Australian navigator. He came to Australia in the year 1770, and landed at Botany Bay and also hoisted the British flag. The vessel he came in was called the Endeavour. At the time Captain Cook came out no one had ever sailed through Bass Strait."

For a large proportion of the children, formal education was destined to end at fifth or sixth grade. It was to be many years before governments accepted the responsibility to provide secular education for all children, and financial resources primarily governed the length of education. Of those from families with restricted means, only children with exceptional intellectual ability and determination managed to overcome the difficulties of obtaining a full secondary education and entering the higher realms of university education.

Pleasant Street did, however, send on a considerable number of its children to further education, at Ballarat, Clarendon and Queen's Colleges, and later at the Ballarat Grammar School, the High School, and the technical schools which were taking their place in the secondary education system.

It was well represented, too, on the battlefields of the world during the cataclysmic years from 1914 to 1918. The school honour board records the names of 143 students who enlisted for active service, of whom 35 lost their lives. Eleven of the school's former pupils were decorated for war service, of whom three were decorated twice. They

were W. Brazenor, D.S.O. and Bar, who later became chairman of the Ballarat Water Commissioners, R. F. Cormack, D.C.M. and Military Medal, and R. Hind, Military Medal and Bar. The honour board itself was erected as a result of the establishment of a special school fund, donations to which were being received as early as November, 1918.

The year 1915 brought a singular distinction to Pleasant Street, when it became a Higher Elementary School, being the first in the State to be granted approval to take Grades Seven and Eight through the first two years of the High School course. Reporting the event, The Courier commented that: "The committee has had to undertake some responsibilities in order to gain this concession. The new class rooms which will be necessary must be equipped with scientific and other apparatus at a cost of £120 to £150 and this expenditure the committee has taken upon itself to meet. A donation of £50 is already promised. It was the fine spirit shown by the committee in the matter that largely influenced the department in granting the request. Special subjects will be taken by different teachers, and members of the teaching staff at the High School will assist."

The contract signed on March 22nd, 1915, with J. H. Brown and Son for works in connection with the provision of these extra facilities amounted to £1,900. A science room and attached cloak room and teachers room were built as an extension to the existing timber building, which housed three classrooms, and at the same time the windows of the original brick classroom block were enlarged, and two weatherboard cloakrooms and two offices were added to the building.

The energetic headmaster, Mr. J. J. Peart, continued in charge of the enlarged school, and confidence was expressed in the success of the development, which would give students the advantage of continuity at the one school, and the opportunity to continue with a further two years of education without any fees.

Probably the least satisfactory aspect of the change was in the field of general classroom extensions. Still more space was obviously needed, and as a temporary measure St. Peter's Sunday School was again in use. Meanwhile, a pavilion classroom was built at a cost of £155, a second one being approved in July, 1916. By this time there were 57 boys and 68 girls in Grades E and F, drawn not only from Pleasant Street, but also from Humffray Street, Macarthur Street, Urquhart Street, Queen Street, Mt. Pleasant, Wendouree, Dana Street, Golden Point, Eureka Street, Scotsburn, Warrenheip and Bungaree schools.



PREP. GRADE — 1920



"THE SCHOOL" — 1923

With complete disregard for the rigors of the Ballarat climate, the new pavilion rooms were built with walls on three sides only, consisting of gauze covered by holland blinds. Mr. Peart complained that the rooms were not weather-proof, and were unsuitable for winter use, but it was not until 1921 that repairs and alterations were carried out. Even then they were not considered entirely satisfactory, as the linings of the walls were not completed. Meanwhile, a request for a third pavilion room had been refused, and instructions were given that surplus children were to go either to the High School or to Golden Point.

The Higher Elementary School continued at Pleasant Street until 1939, when post primary units were established at Urquhart Street, Dana Street and Humffray Street. In the early 1940's, 160 pupils from the High School occupied the unused rooms at Pleasant Street, while attendance at the school dropped to 326, remaining for some time at about that level. The High School "Branch" continued at Pleasant Street until the end of 1953, in spite of the protests of two successive District Inspectors. In 1949 Mr. Lyall, later Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, reported that as the grounds were bounded by streets, no enlargement was possible, and the playing space was totally inadequate for 290 primary school children and 160 Form 1 High School students. He recommended that the High School students be accommodated elsewhere as soon as possible, and all buildings not required by the primary school be removed.

In 1952, with both buildings and students still present, Mr. Earl Pearson reported that the area was not large enough for a primary school. Even the departure of the High School students in 1953 did not leave Pleasant Street in permanent possession of its own facilities. The vacated rooms were not demolished, but were used for eight years, from February, 1955, until August, 1963, by the then newly established Special School.

HOSPITAL AND SCHOOL

FOR a short period in 1919, Pleasant Street ceased to be a school and became an infectious diseases hospital. The bubonic influenza epidemic of that year overtaxed all normal hospital facilities in the city, and the school was taken over as an emergency hospital for 90 to 100 men. Classrooms were converted into wards, with 30 to 40 beds in the acute ward at the western end of the building.

Mrs. Alec McGoldrick, the former Cecilia O'Neil, recently recalled her experiences there as a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.), working under the

health officer, Dr. Tom Donnelly and Matron. On her first day at the hospital five men died. An average working day was about 16 hours, and even in their off-duty time, staff members were not allowed to leave the school grounds. Staff sleeping quarters were provided in a weatherboard building separate from the main building, and those outside, wishing to speak to them, had to do so over the fence, from a distance of eight feet. Priests and Ministers of Religion, a contract mortician and medical officer were the only persons allowed to enter the site. There was no sewerage at the time, and facilities were very limited. When a death occurred, the body was taken away and buried immediately.

This was a traumatic period in the history of Pleasant Street, but by the early 1920's the school was back to normal. An extract from an inspector's report of 1923 indicated that: "The school is very popular with parents; discipline and tone is excellent." The district inspector played an extremely active role in the life of a primary school during the 1920's and 30's, when few teachers had any qualifications other than the practical skills learned on the job, under the tuition of older and more experienced colleagues. Still preserved at Pleasant Street are the records of reports by teachers on junior staff members, many of whom were pursuing their own academic studies while also struggling with their initiation into the teaching profession. Typical of a number of dedicated teachers of her generation was Miss Mary McLean, who was so anxious to become a teacher that she gladly accepted an unpaid position in the school, to which she returned later in her career as a staff member.

The Education Department provided the schools with printed courses of study for each subject, which the teachers followed meticulously. Each subject was divided into weekly units, to ensure that the curriculum was covered, and time allowed for revision before the final examination which decided which children would go on to the next grade. Efficient teachers with their sights set on getting as many children as possible through the final examinations also held mid-year examinations and carried out monthly tests in the three "R's".

The children's work was done in exercise books, each day's work being carefully dated and checked so that the district inspector could see how closely the teacher kept to the proposed plan in the week's work program, and how carefully the work had been corrected. The inspector officially visited each school twice a year, the first time to assess the functioning of the school in its classes, the quality



Joan Downer, Betty Skinner, Betty Waldron, Joyce Martin.
Shirley Youens, Phyllis Radford, Gwenda Dodgshun.



GRADE VII — 1926



AN EARLY FOOTBALL TEAM



GIRLS BASKETBALL — 1927
Roma Suffren, Jessie Philip, Mollie Jolly, Roma Nott, Joyce Clarke,
Joan Deckman, Phillis Russell, Maisie Richardson.

of its programmes and the conduct of the children, and the second time to assess and make a written report on the standard of each teacher's work. Each day was spent in a careful observance of a time table which was required by regulation to be kept on display in each classroom, and there were frequent changes in subject during the day. Discipline had to be orderly, for classes of 50 children were by no means unusual.

A penny savings bank was established in the school in 1928, with 323 depositors, a number which had grown by 1930 to 470, with total deposits of £2,537. In the years to follow, economic considerations were to have an important influence on life in school, as elsewhere. As families struggled through the years of depression, books, and even suitable clothing for attending school, became major considerations. In spite of these problems, the school continued to think of others. In 1932, for instance, Pleasant Street topped the Ballarat schools in the annual egg appeal, giving 189 dozen eggs to the Base Hospital. In 1935 it donated 155 dozen, and in the same year endowed a cot at the hospital. In the following year, provisions were supplied to the Ballarat Orphanage.

Through the efforts of the department, and of parent committees, improvements were also made at the school. The garden was laid out to a new scheme in 1929, and a school plantation was established in 1930 as a long-term fund-raising effort. A broadcasting unit was installed in the school in 1938, and in 1941, repairs to the baths were financed by the Mothers' Club.

By that time, the school had experienced another break in continuity, having been closed for some time in 1937 because of a poliomyelitis epidemic, and now it was again part of a nation at war. Slit trenches were dug in the school grounds in 1941, and were filled in in 1944, without ever having been used, except for training purposes. Crops of potatoes were planted in the lawns, to reduce weeds and raise money for war relief funds, and onions were grown for a similar purpose. The lawns were re-planted in 1945, enclosed by kerbs and fencing. As a reward for its gardening efforts, Pleasant Street won the ANA prize that year for the most improved school garden. The situation was less promising at the young school plantation. Experts advised that the trees were never likely to flourish, and five acres was acquired in a new location, where 2,000 trees were planted.

A fire in 1945, which destroyed the school's commodious play pavilion and tool shed, was a sore blow to the staff and committee. It was two years before a new

shelter shed was built, the work being carried out by S. Ludbrook, for £657. Of more importance in 1945, however, was the ending of the war, celebrated by the inauguration of a "Victory Scholarship", to follow the institution of the "Pleasant Street Mothers' Club Scholarship" founded in the previous year.

TOWARDS A CENTURY

BUILDING questions occupied a good deal of attention at

Pleasant Street in the 1950's, as the school approached its centenary, and already the problems which have led to the present need for rebuilding were becoming evident. It was reported in 1954 that the floors were deeply worn, ceilings and woodwork were either flaking or dingy, and the foundations in the south east corner of the brick building were in need of attention. The local Public Works Department inspector was treating the matter as urgent. In spite of his concern, nothing was achieved for three years. A 1956 report stated that the buildings were in a sorry state, with walls smoke-grimed and weather-stained, while the slow-combustion stoves in the classrooms were barely fit for use, some having rusted out. In 1957 the interior of the school was repainted and the stoves were replaced by gas thermolators, and in the following year the grounds were graded, asphalted and gravelled. In spite of underpinning, a further subsidence occurred in 1959 in the south east corner of the building.

Improvements went on steadily through the 1960's. Internal and external painting were carried out on various occasions during the decade, floors were sanded and re-polished, double gates facing Pleasant Street were erected at the expense of the Mothers' Club, and further ground works were carried out. Plans for drainage and other works, prepared by a committee in 1973, were deferred when it was announced that a new school was to be built within two years, under the terms of the Karmel Report. However, a change in priorities led to deferment of the building plans, until the recent chronic subsidence of the brick building brought about the closing of part of the school, the temporary introduction of portable classrooms, and the renewal of plans for a completely new school.

Throughout all this period, while school committees wrestled with building and other problems, the vigorous day-to-day life of the school continued. The earlier adoption of a school motto, "To Do My Duty" and of a school badge and monogram, added to the sense of identity, and in 1958 the grey school uniform was adopted for general use. This was the year of Pleasant Street's centenary, the



THE SCHOOL CHOIR — 1932



THE SCHOOL BAND — 1935

100th anniversary of the opening of that small St. Peter's School of long ago. The celebrations included a school fete and the switching on of electricity in the school for the first time in its 100 years. The fete was officially opened by the Director-General of Education, Major-General A. H. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay switched on the lights. The active centenary celebrations committee was headed by Mr. R. T. White, M.L.A.

In its second century, Pleasant Street has continued its character as a forward thinking and innovative school, led by a succession of fine principals and teachers. The opening in 1965 of the central library was part of the forward movement which has led to greatly improved facilities in this and other primary schools, catering for the wider needs and interests of children.

From this school, successive generations of children have gone out to further education and to many spheres of community activity. Many have won scholarships from Pleasant Street to the various secondary schools of the city. The real measure of success is the quality of later achievement and citizenship, and Pleasant Street has many ex-students of whom to be proud. They may be found in all spheres of national and local life, in the work of such men as Sir Charles McGrath, chairman of Repco, of that popular and outspoken parliamentarian, Russell White, who was also chairman of the Trotting Control Board, of Professor James Pittard, Professor of Micro-biology at Melbourne University, and locally in the wide-ranging community work of the city's First Citizen, the Mayor, Cr. J. A. Chisholm. Many others will come to mind, as old students recall their contemporaries and re-live, in memory, their pleasant days at Pleasant Street.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

ON May 24th, 1877, the Wendouree Regatta was in full swing, with a flotilla of yachts proceeding around the course, and steamers plying back and forth. From a large boat, rowed on the water, the Pleasant Street School Band 'enlivened the proceedings by discoursing some very good music'. This is the first record of a public appearance by the school's band, and it was to be more than 60 years before the school band of a later generation achieved a standard which made it a force in the musical life of the city.

In 1929 a recently formed school choir competed successfully at South Street, and in May of the following year steps were taken to form a school band, to be known as the Pleasant Street Central School Brass Band. The driv-

ing force behind this musical upsurge was the headmaster, Mr. Bert Baker. Mr. Alf Rowell, Bandmaster of the Ballarat City Band, was appointed band tutor. After serving with the infantry in France in the First World War, Mr. Rowell had gone to England to study music at Keller Hall, under the famous musician, Ord Hime, and was an excellent euphonium player. He returned to Australia about 1920, and was Bandmaster of the Ballarat Soldiers' Memorial Band for a brief time before being appointed to the City Band in 1924 — a position which he held for 25 years. He was also associated with bands at the Ballarat Orphanage and St. Joseph's Home. There is no doubt that his outstanding ability as a musician and teacher was responsible for the success of the Pleasant Street Band and its young players. At that time there was a general growth of school bands throughout Victoria, and many prominent bandsmen, like Mr. Rowell, accepted responsibility for the training of young players who were also to be the future members of local bands.

After the members of the new school band had been selected, it was necessary to equip them with instruments. The money for their purchase was raised through the efforts of a school ladies' committee, assisted by a Government grant. In 1932 the band took part in a State Schools Band Contest at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne, and was placed second in a field of 10. The adjudicator, Mr. Percy Jones of Geelong, expressed surprise at the very high standard achieved. Members of the band at that time were Ken Pattie, Russell Clogan, Tony Lagrota, Aubrey Horsfall, Jack White, Graham Baker, Jack Brown, Jim Taylor, Keith Thompson, Max Gibson, Ian McCoy, Ken Webb, Arthur Wilson, Milton Rickey, Tom Lloyd, Geoff Treween, Ben Cook, Ian Dowler, Doug Speedie, Ian Ranz, Ray Brandt, Jack Lynch, Jim Henry, Max Jeffs, Ken Lockett, Jack Speedie, Neil Webb and Ron Thomas, with Mr. Rowell conducting.

In 1933 the band was ready for South Street, the Mecca of all good bandsmen. It was registered with the Victorian Bands League, and classified as D Grade, but could not, of course, appear in this company without uniforms. These were purchased, at a total cost of £120, by the school committee, with assistance from the Mail newspaper. The Mail conducted a crossword competition, offering liberal prizes to the winners. A popular band boy competition was also held at the school, with Billy Rowe, Ken Pattie and Jack Speedie as the three boys selected. The efforts of bandmaster, pupils and supporters were rewarded when the band carried off first prize in D Grade in this its first open competition, continuing its success in

the following year when it shared first place with the Sunraysia Band from Mildura.

Individual competitors from Pleasant Street were no less successful. Ian McCoy was placed twice in the prize list at South Street with a second and third in the baritone section, and Ray Brandt won first prize in the B Flat Bass section in 1934, while Ken Pattie won the first prize in the open solo at Bendigo in 1935, playing a difficult solo, Hartmann's "Rule Britannia".

The Australian Band and Orchestra News of June 26th, 1935, commented on these successes: "Those who have followed the career of the Pleasant Street Boys' Band must marvel at the success which has attended its efforts both in competition and on the concert platform. Among those who are actively connected with the band there is no doubt as to the cause of this young band's success. Without taking any credit away from the boys themselves for their splendid performances, they could not have reached this high standard except for the conscientious manner in which their bandmaster has carried out his duties, sacrificing very many hours of his time, and often at great inconvenience to himself, so that his young charges should be prepared for their difficult task. His reward, however, has been the splendid manner in which the boys have responded to his teaching. Their position on the prize lists proves that in Mr. Rowell they have been under a teacher whose methods have been perfectly correct. This must be of lasting benefit to Ballarat bands in the future when these young players take their places in the adult bands of the city, to carry on the good work which has already attained such a high standard."

The final sentence of this assessment was certainly prophetic. Ken Pattie was bandmaster of his tutor's old band, the Ballarat City, from 1960 to 1962, and in 1974 and '75, while Russell Clogan was bandmaster from 1968 to 1973 and Lee Wallis, another Pleasant Street bandsman of the 1930's, is the present City Bandmaster. The City of Ballarat Band won the Victorian A Grade Band Championship at South Street in 1950, '53 and '55. Many of its members at that time were former Pleasant Street players, and it was considered that these wins were largely the culmination of the splendid efforts of those who founded the school band in 1930 and developed it during the following decade.

A school music room was furnished in 1935 with 72 chairs, provided by the Mothers' Club, and in the same year new instruments were bought with funds received from the Gillies Bequest. A small orchestra of violins was also formed. The Education Department decision at the

end of the 1930's to discontinue the Seventh and Eighth Grades was a serious blow to the band, and one from which it never fully recovered, although it continued on a smaller scale for some years. Mr. Rowell continued his active work at the school, as well as with the City Band and the City Junior Band, through the 1940's. At his death in the mid-1950's he left most of his library of music to Russell Clogan and Lee Wallis, and it is still being used by the City Band. The band instruments were sold in 1949 and the money used to buy a piano.

Two well known sisters, the Misses Barry, also played an important part in the musical life of the school, as well as in its classroom teaching, being severally responsible for an orchestral group which flourished in the 1920's, and for a percussion band which competed at South Street during a later period.

Miss Monica Miller, whose name became a by-word in music education in Ballarat during her long period at the Ballarat Teachers' College, began her teaching career as a member of the Pleasant Street music staff in 1927.

Mrs. Dorothy Crocker joined the staff in the late 1950's, teaching percussion to the infants and recorder to the older pupils. Mrs. Crocker is now at the Ballarat College of Advanced Education, and is again associated with Pleasant Street, which is leading the city in the development of the highly original and successful Kodaly music teaching system which she has helped to pioneer in Victoria.

Orchestral instruments are being taught in several schools in the inspectorate and Pleasant Street Primary School is one of the "String Schools". Fifteen children learn violin and four children learn cello from Mrs. Pat Thomson and Mr. John Hughes at Pleasant Street Primary School. The children have purchased their own instruments (a violin outfit costs \$48.00 and a cello outfit costs \$300.00). Tuition is free. The children receive a half hour individual lesson a week and an hour's orchestra practice.

Children from several schools visit Pleasant St. Primary School for string orchestra practice, there being two string orchestras in the school — one for beginners and one for more advanced children.

In addition to this, some of the children play in the combined Primary Schools' Symphony Orchestra. This Symphony Orchestra was started in 1977 and is the first of its type for this age group in the State.

This year, 1978, is also the first year a music teacher has been appointed to the school. Mr. Geoff McLean teaches music at the school for four days a week and the



GRADE VI — 1938



GRADE I — 1940



GIRLS BASKETBALL PREMIERS — 1940

J. Overstead, J. Speak, Mr. Seagrave, J. Edwards, F. Shears,
T. Dowling, G. Dean, D. Habba (Capt.), E. Thomas.

children are most enthusiastic about his broad approach to classroom music.

IN THE SWIM

AT a time when swimming facilities for school children were rare, Pleasant Street showed a remarkable degree of foresight in its efforts to provide for this worthwhile field of training. A scheme was put forward by Mr. W. Coulthard, chairman of the school committee in 1911, for a swimming "basin" in which children could be taught to swim before being permitted to attend the municipal baths. The total cost was estimated at £159, excluding the connection of the water supply, and a subsidy was requested from the Education Department. In view of the originality of the request it was perhaps not surprising that it was rejected, but persistence won the day. A further request brought the reply that the matter would be received as favourably as possible. According to an entry in the school cash book of November, 1912, the amount of the subsidy received was £82, which was half the total final cost. The school also worked hard for the project, raising some of the money by donations, and some by means of a fair which realised £108.

Mr. Coulthard turned the first sod on September 22nd, 1912, and the bath was officially opened by Sir Alexander Peacock on November 8th of the following year. The bath, the first of its kind in a State School in Victoria, was a reinforced concrete structure, 36 feet long and 12 feet wide, with a depth of four feet. It was sunk into the ground to a depth of only six inches, leaving a 3 ft. 6 in. wall around the pool, over which the children watched while receiving instruction. A screen was erected inside the entrance door of the enclosure "so that persons entering the enclosure will not look directly at those in the water", and with a further regard to modesty, signs bearing the words "Boys" and "Girls" were made to slide into grooves on the outside of the door to show who was in occupation, and to "prevent mistakes". The opening ceremony, attended by an impressive array of political and educational celebrities, included a demonstration by Mr. Frank Beaurepaire, then the Education Department's swimming expert and demonstrator.

The celebrations also included the launching by the Commonwealth Meteorologist, Mr. H. A. Hunt, of a balloon fitted with instruments for the recording of conditions in the upper atmosphere. The Ballarat Star report of the occasion records that a large crowd watched the release of the hydrogen-filled balloon which was "soon on its rapid journey above and was quickly out of sight".

The district inspector reported shortly after that already 303 pupils used the pool, of whom 130 had learned to swim, 64 junior and 24 senior certificates having been obtained.

The bath was enlarged to its present size in 1925, and additions were also made to buildings surrounding the pool, the construction work on the pool being carried out by the firm of S. G. Ludbrook and Sons for £174. Further major improvements were made in 1961, when £1,000 was spent on a chlorination and water cleaning unit for the maintenance of good health standards.

While the baths were the school's most original sporting facilities, the needs of other sports were not overlooked. In 1922, the year in which Pleasant Street won the shield for swimming, basketball and tennis courts were constructed by local efforts, the tennis courts costing £181 and the basketball court £41. In 1924 the senior girls were undefeated premiers at basketball, while the school was second in the swimming carnival, the girls' swimming team taking first place. A new basketball court was constructed in 1927. The gravelled triangle, bisected by a concrete cricket pitch, was a hard training ground for generations of young cricketers and footballers, while would-be athletes took their training where and how they could. Olympic high jumper, John Vernon, recalls how a rare grassed area was jealously guarded as a site for jumping. Mr. Vernon, like many of his sporting contemporaries, remembers with gratitude the spirit of enthusiasm and encouragement which more than compensated for the lack of the superior facilities now available to many school children.

In spite of the fact that Ballarat league football was played on the City Oval, only a stone's throw from the school grounds, Pleasant Street has not produced a great number of known footballers, but it does claim some of Australia's outstanding athletes. John Vernon himself was three times Australian high jump champion, and competed at the 1950 and 1954 Commonwealth Games and the 1956 Olympic Games. His best jump was 6 ft. 7½ ins. (2.02 metres) using a Western Roll style.

Australian professional sprint champion of 1946, Len Sprague is best known for his exploits at Stawell, where he won Australia's premiere Gift in 1939 off 9½ yards off scratch in a time of 11.9 seconds. In 1941, again at Stawell, he won the 220 yards off scratch in 21.1 seconds and five years later won the same event, again off scratch, in 20.8 seconds, which was one of the fastest times ever recorded by any athlete in the world for 220 yards on a circular track. He also won the 100 yards event at the



GRADE III — 1946



GRADE I BOYS — 1953



GRADE IV — 1953



GRADE I GIRLS — 1953

Melbourne Cricket Ground in the Inter-Services Sports in the early 1940's against top amateur and later Melbourne Lord Mayor, Ted Best. Like Lord Mayor Best, Len Sprague has given much of his life to municipal affairs, having been a Geelong City Councillor for 29 years and a commissioner of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust for 18 years.

The school tradition of athletic prowess is still being upheld by Graham Crouch, who is the holder of Australian records for one mile (3 minutes 56.7 seconds, set in Melbourne on January 9th, 1975) and 1,500 metres (3 minutes 36.9 seconds, Melbourne, February 4th, 1975). At 5 ft. 7 ins., and weighing less than nine stone, Crouch has proved to be a remarkable runner for his size. He represented Australia at the 1974 Commonwealth Games and the 1976 Olympic Games.

Great sports apart, the simple games of the playground have gone on from generation to generation, changing according to season and fashion, from alleys to hopscotch and so on.

New needs have always been met, and new activities provided for. On June 23rd, 1973, a full day fete was held at which \$1,185 was raised for playground development. Of this \$300 was, allocated for gymnastic equipment, and \$800 reserved until required. In 1974 plans were prepared for the adventure playground and outdoor suspension complex erected on the Mair and Pleasant Streets boundaries.

Plans for the rebuilding of the school will mean changes in outdoor facilities as well, and scope for new sporting interests, while the planners hope that the Pleasant Street baths may again lead the State by being the first at a primary school to be heated by solar heating.

EPILOGUE

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

AFTER 100 years of service, the brick building which is the core of the existing Pleasant Street school has obviously reached the end of its useful life. The structural failure which led to the decision to rebuild the school was the signal for the commencement of detailed planning to ensure that the new Pleasant Street is a school designed to meet the needs of children in the years ahead. In accordance with this objective, and with the growing trend towards greater local freedom in planning, an Educational Specification Committee was formed, with representatives of community, parent and staff interests. The educational specification which it has produced sets the pattern for the Pleasant Street Primary School which is to be.

The specification calls for a school which can be seen by the children as exciting, stimulating, challenging and satisfying; a vantage point in their attempts to understand the real world and adapt themselves to it. It should be a place where their questions and explorations are valued; where varying potentialities and talents are discovered, released and developed, allowing optimum growth to be achieved.

Recognising the part which Pleasant Street has played in the life of the local community, the committee points out that "because of the interdependent relationship between the school and the community, part of the school's role is to develop students who will eventually carry on the work of the community. As well as showing a concern for the quality and intellectual aims of education, the school should be preparing well-balanced members of a democracy". It adds that the school must be concerned with community values, while encouraging students to look critically at community standards. It must accept change while also paying due regard to tradition, and must develop a reciprocal relationship involving school and community.

To fulfil these aims, the committee has called for the building of a school which will be compact and economical in space, because of the size and shape of the site, but which will provide teaching and activity areas which are flexible in their use and attractive in their appearance and furnishing. Reference is made to the need for the school to be planned in harmony with its surroundings, and for a design which provides adequate weather protection and economy in heating, lighting and maintenance. The swimming pool must continue to play an important part in school life, as it has in the past. The committee hopes that Pleasant



GIRLS BASKETBALL PREMIERS — 1962

L. Braddock, S. Wellard, J. Kellett, A. Knight,
J. Street, G. Redfern (Capt.), H. Wattie, M. Hutchinson.



FOOTBALL PREMIERS 1967

Back : R. Dunne, S. Weybury, G. Bennett, P. Pearson, D. Beasy,
N. Dodgshun, L. Tucker.
Centre : Mr. L. Morrison, I. Pattie, C. Matthews, J. Cue, D. James,
B. Phillips, C. Gursansky, Mr. G. Jose.
Front : J. Paterson, B. Lockett, J. Dunne (V.C.), T. Bennett (Capt.),
D. Wallis, G. Hoffmann, V. Barby.

Street may again lead the State by being the first primary school in Victoria to have a solar heated pool. It recommends that provision of a covered way between the school and the pool, providing a sheltered area for physical activities when needed, with the possibility that the roof may be utilised as a collector of solar energy for the pool heating.

Whatever the final plans, the new Pleasant Street will be an individual school, no longer cast in a stereotyped State mould, but planned by and for its own people. It is hoped that the community which will share in its future use will join with all Pleasant Street people, past and present, so that everything possible may be done and provided to make the new Pleasant Street School worthy of the past, and of the future.



SCHOOL ORCHESTRA — 1978

Back : Donald Thomson, Joanne Copeman, Annette Gittings, Dougal Richardson,
Lesley Braybrook, Mr. John Hughes, Mrs. Rieko Moritz, Mrs. Pat Thomson,
Simone Titheridge, Melinda Gross, Belinda Bilney, Neville Kent,
Middle : Peter Thomson, Andrew Hughes, Greg Whitelaw, Astrid Fairhall,
Philippa Binns, Angus Richardson, Stephen Hughes, Tiffany Parker.
Front : Martin Wise, Steven Hendy, Sally Dunn, Danielle Fox, Susan Hughes,
Claire Dale, Liesl Chapman.



TEACHING STAFF — 1978

Back : Mr. K. McLean, Mrs. G. Morey, Mrs. H. Romeo, Mrs. R. Meyers,
Mr. C. Albon, Mr. K. Astbury, Miss G. Grady, Mrs. M. Tippet,
Mrs. R. Sebo, Mr. G. McLean.
Front : Mrs. H. Love, Mrs. T. Wilson, Mrs. J. Stickland, Mrs. J. Bradby,
Mrs. J. Harrop, Mrs. T. Parkinson, Miss K. Daly.



Mr. Bart Cahir, Caretaker-Cleaner 1964 —



Mr. Bill Crawford (Secretary), Mrs. Ruth Grose (Treasurer),
and Mr. Bill Rowe (President), Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1978.

APPENDIX

PRINCIPALS, 1858 — 1978

As far as can be ascertained, the following is a list of head teachers, head masters and principals of St. Peter's School and the Pleasant Street School.

Mrs. Catherine Williams	15-2-58—30-6-58
Robert Williams	1-7-58—1867
Thomas Holding	1870—1877
Edward Date	1889—1892
F. Corbett	1-8-92—14-3-94
Joseph Austin (Acting Head)	15-3-94— 6-8-95
C. R. Smithwick	7-8-95—1898
James McAllister	1898—1903
Moses J. Fardy	1903—1907
Charles McLean	1907—1910
A. Barrett	1910—1911
J. J. Peart	1911—1915
George Clarkson	1915—1919
William Guy	1919—1923
A. Tipping	1923—1926
T. Lehane	1927
Robert Baker	1928—1933
J. McCully	1933—1936
E. J. Youlden	1937—1944
A. Munro	1944—1948
M. McLennan	1949—1957
C. P. West	1958
I. Patching	1959—1965
J. Farmer	1965—1967
K. J. Kennedy	1968—1969
R. R. Reed	1970—1972
G. H. Arnott	1973—March, 1976
K. C. Astbury	March, 1976—