Hotham Board of Advice, No. 36.

A GRAND CONCERT

At the Town Hall, Hotham, October 18, 1864.

Commence at eight p.m.

ONE SHILLING ALL PARTS OF THE HALL.

No. 1442

Left: Founders' Signatures.

Hotham Board of Advice.

School:

Choral:

A WARDED TO

J. Friend, Hotham.

WILLIAM NICOL, Chairman.

HENRY AUGUSTUS CLARKE, Correspondent.
Errol Street
The first hundred years
1857-1957

By ELAINE WARNE
We gratefully acknowledge donations from many friends of the School and local businesses towards the cost of publishing this history.

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Errol Street
The first hundred years
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By ELAINE WARNE
Many people have willingly helped in the preparation of this book. The History Officer of the Education Department, Mr N. Drummond, and the librarians and archivists of the LaTrobe Library have frequently answered my queries.

Mrs D. Rutherford kindly made available her invaluable collection of the Mattingley family papers. For permission to refer to the school’s building file (1914-1957) I thank the Education Department and likewise Mr T. Mason for his selection from the recent inspectorial files. Mr B. Murphy inspired the teachers to meet earlier this year to discuss their philosophy. The document which emerged “Concept ‘74”, edited by Miss M. Tenney, forms the basis for part four. The generous and conscientious response by past pupils and teachers to my questionnaires and interviews has provided indispensable information and stimulation.

The permission of the Public Records Office of Victoria to reproduce the school plans, and the photograph of S.S. 307 lent by the Education Department are gratefully acknowledged. The class portrait was supplied, at their own expense, by Mrs Everson and Miss H. Drummond.

For typing patiently and willingly done, Mrs A. Marsden, Mrs S. Carlile and Mrs E. Taylor deserve hearty thanks as does my husband for his painstaking reading of the text.

The book owes its existence to the visionary planning of the Centenary Sub-Committee of the School Committee under the splendid leadership of Mrs Adrienne Clarke, and its successful completion to the encouraging and wise comments made by Dr John Foster of the History department at the Melbourne University.

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Foreword

One aspect of the history of Errol Street which is continually underlined in this description of it, is the diversity of the children who have attended the school and, by inference, of North Melbourne itself. Different racial and ethnic groups encompassing enormous variation in attitudes and expectations have been part of Errol Street almost since its inception.

The lesson which may be learned from the differences in the school and out of it is that most of the children accept and understand them. The atmosphere of the school, with massive changes of staff and changes in the make-up of the children, has rarely changed. There is a oneness, a friendliness and an independence which is rarely found in our society. This more than anything else is the spirit of Errol Street — an inner suburban primary school which perhaps has much to say to the world we live in.

Judith O’Neill
President, School Committee

Introduction

This history of the Errol Street Primary School was commissioned by the Centenary Sub-Committee to mark the centenary of the present school building.

The School was founded in 1857 by Mr Albert Mattingley, and on 1 May 1874, Mr Mattingley, his staff and pupils walked down Errol Street to the new building. Mr Mattingley established a meticulous pattern of keeping and storing records in the new building which persisted so that a complete set of rolls and inspectors reports from 1874 onwards were available for research in 1974. Using these records as a starting point, the author has been able to follow the fortunes of the school, the way it has responded to the varying demands of the community it serves, and its pioneering role in the changing patterns of education. As access to the Education Department records pertaining to the period 1957-1974 is restricted by copyright, the formal history of the school has been written of the first hundred years 1857-1957. The period 1957-1974 is covered in a broader sense and concludes with “Concept ’74”, setting out the current aims and ideals of the school.

Some impressions of the events of the early years were recorded by Albert Mattingley’s son in a booklet prepared for the Diamond Jubilee of the School. These events have been reappraised by the author, and the modest assessment of Albert Mattingley’s contribution, by his son has been placed in a more realistic perspective.

We are fortunate to have an historian of the calibre of Elaine Warne, who has worked in an honorary capacity to prepare this history. The result is a significant contribution both to the history of Education in Victoria and to the history of North Melbourne. Her enthusiasm and commitment to this project has been a continuing inspiration to all the parents, teachers and children concerned in the preparations for the celebration of Centenary Day.

Adrienne Clarke
Convener — Centenary Sub-Committee
Cole's Wharf in the 1850s.
S. T. Gill (by courtesy of the LaTrobe Library).
The Mattingley Venture, 1857-1872

Early Hotham

The district of Hotham, as North Melbourne was called in 1852, had only been open for settlement for six weeks when the Mattingley family, standing on the decks of "The City of Poonah", gazed across the bay to the outlines of Hotham's sole building visible beyond a vast expanse of marshland to the north-west of their destination, Melbourne. The family was soon to settle in Hotham and make its mark on the educational development of the infant district.

Head of the family was John Thomas Mattingley, a 43-year-old cabinet maker from Reading, England. With him came his wife, Elizabeth Ann, then 41 years of age, and nine of their children. After having been seabound for three months the family eagerly hired a horse-drawn cart to carry their trunks to the Flagstaff Hill where they had been advised to dwell. As they drove off the wharf, bustling with sailors, diggers, carters and recently arrived immigrants, they must have been amazed at the lively appearance of their new home in the colonies.

As unassisted migrants they had been able to bring with them a marquee and household chattels. They were fortunate. Many of the 100,000 migrants who arrived in the same year found lodgings in the newly separated colony, almost unprocurable. Albert Mattingley recollected that at the time of his family's arrival there were ticket-of-leave men and roughs from California about, so that he, his brother and father "thought it prudent that each of them should do two hours sentry-go round the marquee each night, armed with a gun" while the family was camped on the Flagstaff Hill.

The recent discoveries of gold sorely overtaxed the township's resources. To relieve the prevailing shortage of housing in the township, a motion proposed by John O'Shanassy and seconded by John Pascoe Fawcett, that land north of the present limits of the township of Melbourne be declared open for auction, was passed in the Legislative Council on 7 July 1853. The area opened to settlement, was called Hotham and greatly impressed the Mattingleys when they inspected it in 1852. It then consisted of "undulating land richly carpeted with grass and studded with noble red gum trees which gave it a park-like appearance." The only building in the area at the time was the Benevolent Asylum which the Mattingleys had seen from the decks of "The City of Poonah" as it had entered the Bay.

In November 1852, John Thomas Mattingley became the first householder of Hotham by renting for his family a four-roomed timber house in Bendigo Street, built by Mr Adams on land purchased at the initial auctions on 8, 9, September. The new locality presented many features of interest to the immigrants from Reading. Aborigines used to camp and occasionally would hold corroborees in the park-like lands. Manna, cicadas, native cats and opossums were new sights. Albert Mattingley delighted in the abundant bird life. "Hundreds of parrots and parakeets of beautiful plumage, the scarlet lory being quite common among them, the white sulphur-crested cockatoo with its harsh screaming note, and occasionally the black cockatoo with its weird cry, the kookaburras with their joyous laugh, magpies with their flute-like notes, mudlarks, ground-larks, honey-eaters ... scarlet breasteds robins, and many other native birds made melody in the trees." Land sold quickly, and in no time the park-like terrain was churned up by the felling of trees for timber and firewood and by the construction of dwellings. Laden drays, bound for the diggings, passed along Howard Street where Hotham's first pub was a popular place for refreshment. After only two years of settlement, William Westgarth recorded in 1854 that "the grassy glades of North Melbourne are now a hard and dusty surface, cut up everywhere and disturbed with the incessant noise of traffic to the Interior." Almost a year after the arrival of the Mattingley family the first school in Hotham, "St. Mary's" was founded in 1853 by the Church of England, under the supervision of the Denominational Schools Board. Charles Mattingley taught at this Church of England school from 1855 to 1856, after which he became a teacher with the Board of National Education, the rival education authority. He later established a school in Heidelberg from which developed the pres-
ent Heidelberg State School. Albert, his brother, having received adequate education in Reading before emigrating, undertook a course in teacher training from October 1857 to April 1858 at the Normal School, provided by the Board of National Education. He sought this training just in time as the paucity of funds led to the closure of the Normal School in 1859, four years after it was first opened.

The extension of education in their new district was noted with great interest by the Mattingleys. Charles, of course, was actually teaching in Hotham during the proliferation of its schools. For two years the Church of England was the sole educator, but from 1855-1856 a "Melbourne North National School" was functioning. In 1856 a second National School was opened in Bourke Street, as well as the Presbyterian North Melbourne Grammar School, the United Presbyterian School and the Wesleyan School. Thus, within four years, the pattern of rival educational institutions, set in Sydney, was re-created in the new township of Hotham.

The first Act in Australia relating to education had been for the establishment in 1848 of the Board of National Education, using as its model Lord Stanley's Irish National System, considered at the time to be highly successful. Until Separation in 1851, Victoria's National Schools were supervised from Sydney. At the same time the Denominational Schools Board came into existence to superintend church schools, with a special board for the Port Phillip District. Great rivalry existed between these two boards for prestige, power and pupils. Professor Austin has exposed the hopes of many at Separation that the National System would never be realised in Victoria. The Denominational Schools received favoured treatment and "on several occasions almost succeeded in becoming the only state-supported system."12

However, despite the duplication of schools in Hotham the nearest Infant School was at the Model School in the Melbourne township. The new settlement was soon to boast a flourishing infant school which before long affirmed the survival, in Hotham at least, of the National School system.

Mrs Mattingley's Infant School, 1857

On 13 July 1857, Mrs Elizabeth Ann Mattingley, then 46 years old, opened an Infant School in her house at 18 Errol Street in the police district of Hotham, County Bourke. She lived in a double-storey weatherboard residence, with a tin roof, 70 feet long, 25 feet wide and 22 feet high, for which she paid a weekly rental of one pound. Although three rooms were used for her private residence, two rooms were spared for her pupils, one of which also served as a family dining room.13

The 22 youngsters who arrived that day seeking admission entered a fairly large, well-ventilated room 15 feet by 15 feet and only about 10 feet high. The youngest paid fees of sixpence for the first week and the older children's fees were ninepence. For the school year of approximately 246 days these fees would have totalled 25 shillings per child. A first class artisan at the time working a 10-hour day could earn five to six pounds per week. Parents may have been paying as much as 10 shillings rent per room per week, one shilling for a four pound loaf of bread, threepence to sixpence per pound of beef, sevenpence to ninepence per pound of potatoes, and 10 shillings for a dozen eggs.14 The parents must have been able to spare the school fees, and the children pleased, as the initial 22 pupils attended regularly thereafter. The second week 39 enrolled. 44 the third week, and within a month 54 names were on Mrs Mattingley's roll.15

The two school rooms could accommodate about 80 pupils. The largest desk seated eight youngsters, and the others sat on long forms, 10 to each form. Within two months 58 pupils had enrolled. Attendances, which averaged from 45 to 55 during August and September were increasing weekly, and by 9 September 1857, confident in the future of her private venture, Mrs Mattingley applied to the Board of National Education for assistance as a non-vested school, in accordance with the following regulation:

"The Commissioners will at their discretion, take under their supervision schools not vested in them and to the building of which they have not yet contributed, but which receive aid by way of salary and books."16
Between 1854 and 1859 the number of non-vested schools had increased from four to 31. Mrs Mattingley's school belonged to the permanently non-vested section.

All regulations had to be respected by Mrs Mattingley, and for the continuance of aid the school house and furniture had to be kept in a Condition repairs by private contribution, the school conducted in all respects in a satisfactory manner and the daily average attendance had to be adequate.

In 1857, 93 National Schools were in operation in Melbourne, in the country and on the goldfields. The enrolment of Mrs Mattingley's school, 58, compared favourably with the average enrolment of these schools, 66. Her establishment was considered by the Inspector to be "in a locality well suited for an infant school." Elizabeth's reasons for converting her private-venture school, run entirely at her own discretion, into a non-vested National School are unknown. Possibly the sheer challenge of the ever-growing enrolments may have motivated her in combination with her conviction and vision as an educator. In her application she assured the Board that enrolment "would increase if (she) had a larger room." Although she signed herself an Anglican, she declared that her school was a private venture, having "no connexion with church property or function." She was required to appoint a local Board of Patrons to assist her in the running of the school, and to display conspicuously the title NATIONAL SCHOOL.

Mrs Mattingley was declared a Probationer until she sat the National Board's qualifying examination, as was the procedure for all new applicants. When first inspected she was managing her 50 pupils in a manner deemed conservative at the time. Her initial inspection yielded the following report:

"She has to learn how to manage (an Infant School) according to modern principles, and she misplaces the, but otherwise she seems an eligible person."

She had no set timetable initially. Multiplication tables were learnt by collective recitation and were accompanied by physical exercises. Small extracts were read, under the guidance of Mrs Mattingley in one section and the monitors in the other section. At 10.30 a.m. all the children would kneel down and repeat after Mrs Mattingley an extemporary prayer. With so many young children gathered in the one schoolroom the maintenance of order was a constant necessity. Rowdy children were made to stand on forms, and during her first inspection, one recalcitrant lad was whipped on the hand.

Despite her urgent pleas, Mrs Mattingley was not granted a larger schoolroom by the Commissioners and repayments for her rent were months delayed. Attendances rose steadily and by early December 1857, with 110 names on the rolls, seating accommodation had become totally inadequate. Accommodation was further taxed by the formation of a third class, which did not properly belong to an Infant School. The wish of parents that their young children be accompanied by their elder sisters had necessitated the extra class. She reported to the Board that her "present schoolrooms are not large enough to accommodate such a large number." Busy days and
large classes only combined to strengthen her vision and she again affirmed to the Board, "I feel satisfied that had I a suitable School House with proper assistance, it would continue to increase and ultimately be a fine school." 26

Easily convinced of her need for assistance, the Board granted Mrs Mattingley in 1858 the services of two monitresses each receiving a salary of 20 pounds per annum. Miss Emily Gibbons was the first monitress. The second, Miss Emma Good, served from March to June of 1858, when she was replaced by Miss Emilie Ross. 27 These young monitresses were deemed fit for the duties entrusted to them by Inspector Venables, who, in 1862 commended them for their activity and efficiency. 28 At her own expense, Mrs Mattingley employed two extra monitresses. The First and Second Classes were taught by the monitresses, while Mrs Mattingley taught the Third and Sequel classes.

With four monitresses the strain of solo management was somewhat alleviated. Monitors, usually aged between 13 and 16 years, were chosen from those who had shown aptitude for teaching. But they were only novices in the art of teaching which involved Mrs Mattingley in supervision and which left the ultimate responsibility for school order still in her hands.

The services of a Drawing Master and a Singing Teacher were also arranged in response to a request from the older pupils. The Denominational schools in the district were served by a very active Singing Master, and no doubt Mrs Mattingley was determined to provide equivalent services. Mr Bonwick, who remained the school’s Singing Master for many years, was an excellent teacher. In 1859, for instance, his collective lesson greatly impressed the Chief Inspector, especially for the order, attention and earnestness of the children. 29

A source of further relief for Mrs Mattingley was the appointment of her local patrons, an essential part of every National School. They were responsible for the general overseeing of the school’s affairs, for the maintenance of the school premises, the recommendation of teachers for appointment and the distribution of school fees among the teachers. In setting the fees they were to arrive at “that sum which will be so much as to encourage a parent to send his children to a National School, and, at the same time, so large as to render him anxious not to lose the value of money.” 30 Initially three local residents were appointed as Patrons, Martin H. Irving, the Professor of Greek at Melbourne University, acted as the founding correspondent. In a concerned and sympathetic manner he represented the school’s needs through eloquent and commanding correspondence to the Board. He was assisted by Henry J. Walsh, an Alderman and jeweller and by Thomas Rhind, a Commission Agent.

No longer could Mrs Mattingley levy and spend fees in her own operation. However, the fees were not diminished and were now used to supplement salaries paid by the Board, which for the three months of 1857 amounted to 28 pounds, 3 shillings and 4 pence. 31 A small portion of the fees was devoted to a fund for maintenance work and incidental expenses. At no time did Mrs Mattingley request aid for these purposes from the Board’s funds.

A free stock of books, slates and maps was issued to her school upon its becoming a National School. One large blackboard served all the classes initially, but by 1862 the schoolroom had three easel blackboards. Mrs Mattingley had been using the books published by the Irish National Schools Board which were popular at the time and sold at a much cheaper rate than other textbooks available. Now, each pupil received a free slate and, according to his level, a First Book of Lessons, a Second Book of Lessons, or the Sequel. Any other books required had to be purchased by the parents. In 1859, for instance, calculated on the average attendance in her school, each one of Mrs Mattingley’s pupils spent approximately 2 shillings on books. 32 Maps of Australia, Europe, Asia and the World adorned the schoolroom walls, as well as a time-table, a copy of the Ten Commandments and a large copy of “The General Lesson” the Christian contents of which Mrs Mattingley was expected to inculcate into school life. In addition, scripture lessons were given from 12 to 12.30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. 33

Thus, the National System, struggling to function with its limited resources, had inherited a flourishing infant school which provided for Hotham a service offered by no other school in the district. Mrs Mattingley’s school continued to expand, whereas the previous two National Schools in the neighbourhood had met an early demise. At this stage, the older children could procure education at the nearby Anglican, Wesleyan and Presbyterian Schools.

Albert Mattingley’s Upper School, 1858

On 2 August 1858, the National Schools Board approved an application for assistance in establishing a non-vested upper school in Hotham. 1 The applicant was Elizabeth Mattingley’s 21-year-old son, Albert, by then a trained National School teacher. The Chief Inspector approved the schoolroom which was built of iron and lined with wood and papered. The floor was of wood and a wooden ceiling covered half the room. Ventilation was provided through openings in the roof and in one wall. According to the requirements of the day, the lighting was considered sufficient. The schoolroom measured 49 feet by 19 feet 6 inches. Wall-flap desks which ran along one wall, and forms around the eight flat tables (7 feet by 18 inches) accommodated 130 children. For recitation, singing and oral work the children sat on 11 forms, each 11 feet 6 inches in length. 2

A music board and two blackboards completed the furnishings, all of which were in a good state of repair. Books were stored in Mr Mattingley’s desk or on open shelves. Caps and bonnets were scattered at the back of the room through lack of suitable pegs. The single-storey building was in a good state of repair, erected upon private property on the corner of Errol and Queensberry Streets, Hotham. Albert rented it from his father for the sum of 78 pounds per annum. Although the Reverend John Reid had held Presbyterian services and classes in the room in 1857, Mattingley declared to the Commissioners that the
schoolroom now had "no connection with a Religious Establishment".

Expecting only 20 enrolments the first month, great must have been Mattingley's amazement on the opening day of 8 August 1858, when 43 children sought enrolment, willing to pay fees ranging from 1 shilling to 1 shilling and 6 pence. Considering the number of schools already in the district, the initial intake was pleasingly large. Three weeks later, the Chief Inspector, amazed at the steady growth in enrolment, attributed the increase to the populous nature of the neighbourhood, believing that Mattingley could not yet be much known. However, he detected the quality which ensured Mattingley's success. "Knowing however" he added, "that if not the best, he is one of the best of our teachers, I can have no doubt but that he will not only maintain but greatly increase his numbers." 13

The 60 children, averaging nine years of age, quickly became too much for one teacher to manage and within a few weeks Mattingley engaged two monitors at his own expense. Mattingley took over the fourth class, but he read the scripture lesson and general lesson to a daily gathering of all the students.

Attendance figures continued to increase rapidly throughout September 1858, and Mattingley requested from the Board the aid of an Assistant Teacher. By November, with an average attendance of 77 the schoolroom was "scarcely large enough" 14 and became even less so by December when 100 children had to be squeezed into it.

**NATIONAL SCHOOL No. 206, 1858-1862**

Albert's upper School combined with his mother's Infant School to form the non-vested Errol Street National School No. 206 Hotham. Although passers-by would have noticed the title NATIONAL SCHOOL on the iron corner building, it was henceforth referred to as "Mattingley's School."

Mattingley's reasons for choosing to establish a National School have been lost. In view of his active involvement in the life of the Church of England, as a parishioner of St Mary's and St George's, it would not have been surprising if he had opened a school under the auspices of the wealthier Denominational Board. For many years a member of the Anglican Synod, Albert was the Superintendent of the old St Paul's Sunday School and a vestryman of St George's, Flemington, being one of the four parishioners responsible for the erection of the old St George's Church in Royal Park where a memorial window was installed in his memory. 15 His mother's experience had probably taught him of the growing pains associated with a private venture school, and the third class tacked on to her proper classes indicated a need for a school for older children close by. Also his qualification as a

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**Pupils' attendance sheet, July, August, 1857.**

Albert Mattingley, Founder.
Headmaster, 1858-1894.
trained National teacher opened certain enticing prospects for inspection and salary.

Unfortunately, he sought association with the Board of National Education at a time when it was assailed by thwarting influences. In their fourth annual report the Commissioners deplored "the discouragement given to educational efforts... People who would otherwise have exerted themselves in the cause, have abandoned the attempt in despair... we have no funds... We have been working under great discouragement, sufficient to have abated the ardour of the warmest supporters of the National System." In view of the paucity of funds, applications for the provision of schoolhouses were deferred and Mattingley was wise to establish a non-vested school with request for aid by way of rent, salary and books only. The Board's assistance amounted to 150 pounds towards his salary, 39 pounds towards the school rent and a grant of 45 pounds for house rent.

While proving himself a warm supporter of the struggling National System, Mattingley had a staunch conviction and an ideal of quality for his school, which unfortunately could not be realized by the Board. Ever willing to expand and improve, he wrote to the Board of "improvements to the school which are absolutely necessary." He required a larger schoolroom and improved facilities but the Commissioners could grant no aid beyond the free issue of books, slates and charts.

The school was visited and advised by the same local Patrons as appointed by his mother, and after frequent visits to the school in 1858, Professor Irving declared to the Board in January 1859, that "for efficient working, one assistant teacher and two monitresses would be needed." One assistant teacher, Miss Ellen Tunnacliffe, and one monitress only were appointed, probably in accordance with the prevailing teacher-pupil ratio. No drawing master had yet been appointed and singing classes under Mr Bonwick were combined with the infant section. With 197 upper students combined with 185 infants Professor Irving reported that "neither the older nor the younger children can make so much progress as they might."ºº

With an average attendance of 96 by June 1859, Professor Irving stressed that "the present school may be judged too small for the wants of the district." The schoolroom, 49 feet by 19 feet only contained seating accommodation for 90 children with four desks seating eight children each and six forms each with room for 10 youngsters. In view of the obvious need for expansion Mattingley must have been frustrated when an application from the local Presbyterians to use the schoolroom for Sunday worship in return for 7 shillings and 6 pence rent per week was refused. Benjamin Kane, the Secretary, had advised that "schoolhouses may be used solely for the purposes of National Education, and none other."ººº Aware of the paucity of funds and realizing that no further aid would be forthcoming from the Board, Mattingley would surely have welcomed the prospect of extra income as a means of enlarging his schoolroom and of making "many valuable improvements in the school which (were) absolutely necessary."ººº

If the Board were unable to provide a large schoolroom for the district, Mattingley was not to be daunted. Rather than abandon his attempt in despair, "believing that the support of the Board would be continued to him," he built in 1859 two new brick schoolrooms on ground in his possession, situated on the west side of Errol Street, near its intersection with Queensberry Street, Hotham. The roof was slated and ceilinged with plaster. Sufficient light was admitted through windows at the small ends, and ventilation was considered good. It was described by the Chief Inspector in March 1859 as "A very good building, although not perfectly satisfactory in an educational point of view."ººº It is a shame that his views were not elucidated. Possibly he was critical of the lack of pegs for hanging caps and bonnets, or the lack of proper...
storage space for books and requisites. Was he critical of the fact that the property was not fenced, that the only playground for the older children was an open space near the school? He may have believed that the small yard at the rear of the schoolroom was not sufficiently large for the infants’ playground. If he had been an inspector of foresight he may have been concerned at the building’s capacity to cope with increased numbers. Although both rooms were built to admit extension once the enrolment increased, the original rooms became stuffy, unavoidably untidy and the arrangement of the furniture became less judicious as a result of overcrowding. However, the Organizing Master in 1860 thought the premises were very suitable.16

The infants’ schoolroom, 39 feet by 16 feet and 13 feet high, was declared capable of holding 150 infants. The children were divided into five groups or classes which could be accommodated on the 10-tier gallery or on the 18 forms. The upper classes were accommodated in the larger schoolroom, 48 feet by 20 feet. Mattingley went to great expense in the fitting out of his schoolroom, which, with the equipment issued by the Board may have looked like the room sketched (on page 10).

Only once in 1861 it seems was Mattingley tempted to discontinue his loyal support for the Board. After numerous refusals to his requests for staff, Professor Irving wrote the following letter to the Commissioners:

I feel it is my duty to mention to the Board that unless Mr Mattingley can obtain that assistance from the Board which will enable him to keep his school thoroughly efficient, there is a possibility of the school being placed under the denominational Board on the condition of increased help. While I should much regret this step, I could not interfere in any way to prevent his doing that which would advance his own interests.17

Due to a mal-apportionment of the educational vote in 1859 in favour of the Denominational Board, allowances for rent of National School houses had been struck off altogether, all teachers, including those at Mattingley’s school, faced a 5 per cent reduction in salaries and allowances, promotion by examination was suspended, and pupil teachers on inferior salaries replaced the more experienced Assistant Teachers. Mattingley’s wavering was not uncommon. The Commissioners reported that the restrictions had caused several teachers to “throw up their schools in disgust.”18 When the Board could not meet the 150 applications for aid, many had to transfer their applications to the Denominational Board. Albert did not! By means of negotiation not recorded, he was appeased and National School No 206 continued to function.

The continuing shortage of space and funds exerted a regrettable and downgrading effect on the achievement of both schools. It was considered an immense advantage to have a separate Infant School but due to the lack of space in the Upper School, children who were ready to be promoted had to be detained in the infant schoolroom, exposed to its juvenile focus. Yet, the detained children so swelled the numbers requiring attention that educational efforts had to be widely spread. Inspector Venables reported to the Commissioners in 1862 that “A large proportion of the children have no business to be kept in the infants’ school and should be transferred if there were room in the upper school to receive them — At present the mixed system fails to secure efficiency either as an infant school or ordinary school, though individually the staff show a very fair amount of aptitude.”19 The Mattingley’s had to continue to teach with patience, vision and resourcefulness for many years, for the tribulations of overcrowding were not removed until the new State School was built in 1874.

School life in a National School had its own features. By regulation two consecutive hours in the morning and another two consecutive hours in the afternoon had to be devoted to timetabled secular instruction, with half hourly sessions of religious instruction on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays being taught out of these hours to children of consenting parents. Mattingley, as Schoolmaster, read the General Lesson and Scripture Lesson daily. The timetable for the Upper Schoolroom was the same every day, with 30-minute lessons on such subjects as “Reading and Explanation, Elementary Tables and Notation, Pointing out Parts of Speech, Grammar, Geography, Writing, Spelling from Dictation and Singing.” The girls were offered “Sewing and Knitting, Making, Mending and Cutting Out, Plain and Fancy Work” as well as Crochet and Berlin Wool work. Boys in the fourth and
fifth class learnt Mensuration, Geometry, Algebra and Bookkeeping. Latin, French, Dancing and Instrumental Music were also taken by some children.

With many children in the Upper Classroom, mostly between the ages of seven and eleven, the activities and achievements were varied. Rather than the annual examination which later became fashionable, children were promoted frequently by proficiency in reading, arithmetic and writing at the quarterly examinations. While this method introduced frequent testing, it did allow for a flexibility of progress lost in later years. For instance, on the day of inspection in August 1858, three of the upper children were learning addition, four, subtraction, four were tackling multiplication, four girls were doing short divisions and one boy was concentrating on long division. For such diversity, Mattingley had to give individual instruction to his fourth class. Grammar, tables, mental arithmetic, singing and drawing were taken by all students. Not all learning was individual, however. A fair proportion of each week was spent in collective recitation of tables, geographical names and maps. Some classes, such as geography for the Second and Third Classes and the Fourth and Fifth Classes, were conducted collectively. Most children in the Upper School had graduated from slates to paper.

The school day ran from 9 am to 4 pm with a lunch recess of two hours. Mattingley called the Rolls at 10.45 am and again at 3.20 pm and before the commencement of morning lessons an "inspection as to personal cleanliness" was performed. Cleanliness and order of the scholars was one point always checked by the inspectors and the scholars of the Mixed National School. No 206 were always commended.

In 1859 the school year was 246 days long, with an average attendance in the Mixed School of 197 days, and in the Infant Section of 185 days. On the average, National Schools in Victoria were open for 237 with an average attendance of 164 days, which shows that the Errol Street National School was open for longer and with a higher average attendance.

In 1862, seven days were granted for the Christmas festivities and two days for Easter. Single days were granted on special occasions. There was no fixed school calendar and other school years differed. The Rose Street School in Collingwood was open for 265 days, the Model Schools for 232 days, while the Footscray National School in 1862 was open for the short span of 65 days. Serious classwork continued until late December when the Annual Examination was held. Mattingley's school was inspected at least once a year and twice a year in 1859, 1860, and 1862. Prizes were awarded by both Mr and Mrs Mattingley. In the Infant Schoolroom, cards of Merit were also awarded and successful children took special places in the room as a reward for good work. Undesirable behaviour was punished with arduous tasks, corporal punishment and detention.

If a pupil was absent over a period without explanation his parents were likely to receive a visit from his teacher to ascertain the reason. Although education was not then free, poverty need not debar a child from the fee-charging school. In 1859, two children from the Mixed School and eight infants were declared destitute whereupon their fees were paid by the Board. In 1860 the number had increased to six and 10 respectively which rose to six and 12 the following year.

In 1859, the cost of educating a child at Mattingley's school was 2 pounds 17 shillings and 1 penny, of which 1 pound 5 shillings was provided by fees and the rest by the Board. This figure compares favourably with the costs of other schools. For instance, each child at Oxford Street School, Collingwood, cost 5 pounds 7 shillings and 7 pence. Many parents spent 7 shillings per child, while two expended as much as 10 pounds and 14 pounds per child. Most probably, Errol Street School's figures are a testimony to Mattingley's skilful management. Parents must have seen value for their money and found the fees a manageable sum of for the 207 pounds paid in fees in 1860 for instance, in the Upper School less than 30 pounds was due, but unpaid, and of the 160 pounds 8 shillings and 5 pence received for the Infants' fees only a little over 13 pounds was unpaid. Parents spent three shillings per child for books which evinced greater interest than shown by the general sum spent on books, which was 1 shilling and 5 pence per child.

The staff of Mattingley's school was never excessive in number and often below the rather stringent teacher-pupil ratio. In 1860 the ratio was one literary teacher to every 82 children on the rolls, "a proportion which cannot be considered excessive," declared the Commissioners. In all, 20 staff are known to have taught at the school, most of whom had not previously taught in other schools. They were thus particularly susceptible to the example and inspiration of their Head Teachers, Albert and Elizabeth. In 1862, Albert's sister, Ellen Mattingley taught at the school, with a classification the same as her mother's. Sarah Clarke was the only Australian-born member of staff. Eight had emigrated from England, Jane Bowden from Ireland and Elizabeth Robertson and Diana McKenzie from Scotland.

Professor Irving held Mr Mattingley in high esteem as a Headmaster and regularly made his opinion known to the Board. In January 1860 he declared that "the steady growth of his school is proof of his worth as a teacher." Later that year he wrote, "Nothing can be said ... against the efficiency of the present school. Mr Mattingley has for 11 months stood alone in North Melbourne in connexion with the National Board." In view of Professor Irving's skill and
experience in educational matters, such words are indeed praise. The local Patrons obviously beheld Mattingley as the fulfilment of the National School teacher who was envisaged as "a person of Christian sentiment, of calm temper and discretion, imbued with the spirit of peace, of obedience to the law and of loyalty to his sovereign." He not only had to possess the "art of communicating knowledge but be capable of moulding the mind of youth and of giving to the power which education confers, a useful direction." In 1860, the Patrons nominated Mattingley for the Board's bonus for the most deserving schoolmaster, on the grounds of his diligence and the ability he displayed in the management of the school — "for the good order and efficiency in which it is kept, and for the large number of children on the Rolls and in Attendance." The Commissioners, however, were unable to consider their nomination "through want of funds".

Establishing a school, as he did, with the benefit of formal teacher training at the Normal School, Mattingley had an immense advantage over many of his contemporaries. From the very first inspection, the organization and tone of his school evoked words of warm praise from the various inspectors, who had circulated among the pioneering schools, the quality of which varied to an astounding extent. In 1859, the Chief Inspector wrote that Mattingley's arrangement in the Upper School was much superior to that in most schools. Perhaps in comparison with other schools, the Inspector's report dwelt on the "remarkable quiet and obedience" of the Hotham National School. The timetable drawn up with care, taught instant admiration, especially as it was adhered to by Mattingley while other Headmasters worked at a less structured and quite often, chaotic pace.

The conclusion of his first Inspection Report points to an interesting duality in achievement which characterised Mattingley's whole career in education. He was summed up as "A very excellent schoolmaster and teacher." As the latter he was described as having a confident manner in all aspects, good handwriting and good skill in class management. But it was the former that won unflagging praise from any who saw him in action in his school. For instance it was the success of his actual school, its efficiency and order which so impressed the local Patrons.

Mattingley was also highly esteemed by his pupils, who, in December 1863, on the occasion of their examination, presented him with a Bible, "as a testimony of their respect and the loving affection in which he is regarded by them."

By 1862, the Board of Local Patrons had increased its membership to 10. Among its members were a Professor (M. H. Irving); a Member of the Legislative Assembly, "a gentleman so influential in the district" (John Davies); a manufacturer who was to become a leading industrialist in Hotham (John Buncle); a Reader in the Legislative Assembly (George Matthew Hardess); an Alderman and Jeweller (Henry J. Walsh); a Commission Agent (Thomas); a Police Magistrate (E. P. S. Sturt); a miller (William Aitken); a chemist (Charles Ager Atkins) and a slaughterman (H. Mawbey).

The choice of Martin Howy Irving (1832-1912) as founding correspondent of the Mattingleys' schools was an inspired one. He was a hardworking person and a fine organizer, who "knew more about teaching and its methods than any other man I have met," recalled a fellow teacher, F. R. Andrews. In 1871 he took over the Headmastership of Wesley College, Melbourne, which he held for five years. Geoffrey Blainey believes that it "is doubtful if there was a more capable Australian headmaster in the nineteenth century than Martin Howy Irving." In 1876 he established the Hawthorn Grammar School whose pupils excelled under his stimulating and expert tuition. In 1885, James A. Froude described Martin Irving after meeting him in Melbourne. "His face reminded me of his father's; there were the same finely-cut features, the same eager, noble and generous expression; but he was calmer and quieter. Enthusiasm had become tempered down into rational and practical energy." Professor Irving returned to England in the 1880's where he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Glasgow University. It was indeed a privilege for the Hotham National School No 206 to receive his concerned patronage and influential guidance.

The Local Patrons were also concerned with the recognition of Elizabeth's status as a teacher. Hers was an amazing career of survival and achievement in view of her lack of formal training. Inspector Orlebar wrote in 1857 that she had received no training nor had contact with an infant school, but her manner was firm, deliberate and quiet and he regarded her as "a desirable person to encourage in this work." The several inspectors who witnessed her early teaching style responded to her unusual case for she had many points of a good teacher. The tone of her voice was good, although the inspectors, aiming at a standard pronunciation and spelling to cope with the variety of dialects spoken by the immigrants, made constant reference to her defective aspiration which seemed to belong to the accepted Reading accent.

Yet, as may be expected of one who came to the task untrained, her early teaching displayed ignorance of the accepted methods of imparting knowledge to infants. She gradually learnt current methods, aided by constructive advice from her Inspectors who took her case to heart. They recognized her as a zealous teacher who was not conceited and year by year they reported that their suggestions had been tried to good effect by Mrs Mattingley. Reading was taught in smaller sections, the work of the monitresses was more frequently supervised, and by 1861, the timetable was drawn up. This excited the Inspectors who trusted timetables to uplift the tone and efficiency of any school. Year by year, the large number of children, housed in her overcrowded schoolroom, became more orderly and her skill in classifying the scholars, maintaining discipline and in ordering her school noticeably improved.

Mrs Mattingley taught the Third Class and the sequel classes of children who had outstripped their classmates before the quarterly examination fell due.
It seems her skills and interests were with the older children and those of ripe achievement. She left the younger children to the monitresses.

Early in 1862, in consideration of her years of service, Professor Irving requested that the Commissioners grant her a classification without examination, which would entitle her to a higher salary than she had been receiving since 1857. Despite three letters, Mrs Mattingley was granted the lowly classification of Div. 2, Class III. In condemning this classification, Martin Irving wrote, "the school she teaches is the largest infant school under the Board, and her time is so fully occupied in its duties as to render it impossible for her to work for an examination even could she at her age compete on equal terms with younger candidates for classification." Mrs Mattingley's school, with an enrolment in 1861 of 268 infants was the largest of the five schools with infant departments—the next largest section being at the Model schools. The only school with overall greater enrolment was at Lennox Street, Richmond, where 294 children of all ages were on the rolls. In 1859, her group of three to five-year-olds was larger than any in the Melbourne and Geelong schools, and her group of five to eight-year-olds was equalled in number only by the Model schools.

In appealing against her classification, Mrs Mattingley worried less about her five-year-success story being overlooked, and more about the practicalities of being the Infant Mistress. She wrote that if her Assistants were to receive higher classifications at the forthcoming examination she feared she would lose a great deal of influence and perhaps her authority in the school. Apart from her daily commitment to her infants' education she explained "however conversant I might be with the required subjects excessive nervousness together with great weakness arising from recent illness render it impossible for me to undergo the excitement of an examination." All appeals failed. At 50 years of age, Mrs Mattingley, the pioneer of infant education in North Melbourne, received an official classification and remuneration which could not tally with her actual achievements.

She was a capable and stalwart woman who was familiar in Rotham clad in her long, lead weighted skirt, with a large camea nestling into the lace ruffles about her neck. A central parting in her neat hair appeared under a simple lace-ruffle bonnet. Her captivating eyes could narrow into a stern stare or soften into a gentle glance. Her mouth at rest stood firm and tight, having responded with determination over the years to the challenges of family rearing and educational responsibilities. But her mouth was able to flash a smile which set her eyes a-twinkle.

Born in Reading, in 1811, the daughter of Robert James Long, a coach proprietor, and Charlotte Elizabeth (nee Lighthouse), at 17 years of age Elizabeth married John Thomas Mattingley at Reading. Of the 14 children born to them, nine lived to accompany their parents to Australia in 1852, where Elizabeth Ann spent her last 28 years in establishing the Infant School described in this chapter. She taught for 22 years, from 1859 until 1879. On 8 January 1881, two years after retiring from teaching she suddenly died of apoplexy, at the age of 69 years, in her house in Shiel Street, North Melbourne. The Reverend Robert Potter performed her burial service and she was buried in the Melbourne General cemetery alongside her husband and four of her children.46

The Common School
No. 206, 1862-1872

In the Autumn twilight of 1864 workers and shoppers returning home along Errol Street noticed under the light of the gaslamp a new inscription on the facade of Mattingley's National School. The name COMMON SCHOOL NO 206 now appeared. As they cast an admiring glance at the new red-brick Town Hall opposite they may have wondered about the school's new title. The change in name had been required by Richard Heale's Act for the better Maintenance and Establishment of Common Schools in Victoria (Act 25, Vict. No. 149) passed on 18 June 1862. This Act ushered in the era of Common Schools which lasted until 1872. The term "Common School" enjoyed scant popularity and as it was permissible to identify the school by the name of its founder, scholars and residents continued to refer to the thriving school in Errol Street as Mattingley's school.

The brick schoolrooms for the Mixed School and Infant School built by Mr Mattingley in 1859 continued in use as a non-vested institution, receiving no aid towards maintenance or extension from the new Board of Education. Albert Mattingley must have valued the independence of his private venture school built on his own property, to resist as he did vesting it in the Board. Under the pressures of increasing enrolment, aid towards building extension would have been valuable.

In 1866 nine of the 14 private-venture schools in Melbourne were the property of individual teachers.7 George Street School, Fitzroy was owned by Mr Templeton, Bell Street by Mr Conby, Grosvenor by Mr Puckey and Errol Street by Mr Mattingley. In 1866 these four teachers claimed that their schools cost them jointly 10,000 pounds. From 1870 to its closure in 1874 the school was referred to as quasi-vested. The new term, however, did not imply increased aid from the Board. It was used solely to distinguish non-vested ex-National Schools from ex-Denominational Schools whose title remained "non-vested".

Due to disastrous decisions and negligent treatment the individual files for all the Common Schools have perished, leaving extant only a bare outline of facts for the Errol Street Common School. Thus, the main sources for this section are the Reports of the Board of Education and local recollections.

The Common Schools Act required the provision of two consecutive hours of secular instruction before noon and two hours after noon. Parents and promoters of the school were required to provide at least one third of the total cost of education at the school.4 In 1865 for instance 47 percent of the school's income arose from fees and local contributions in the Mixed School, and 33 per cent in the Infant School.4 Orphans and destitute children were paid for by the Board. In 1864 there were four such children in Mr Mattingley's

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classes and 30 in Mrs Mattingley's room. A peak was reached in 1867 when the number of destitute children had risen to 50 in the Mixed School and 74 in the Infant section.\footnote{For the fee of one penny per week in each subject the children could learn singing and drawing. It is not known if the subjects were available at the school between 1862-1866, although in view of their popularity in the National School timetable it is likely that they were. In 1867 both the infants and older children learnt singing while drawing was available only in the Mixed School. By 1870, however, singing and drawing were taken only in the Mixed School.}

A local committee of five residents of Hotham replaced the Board of Patrons which had governed the school in its National phase. Those who had been patrons were re-elected for the first three years. Thus until 1865 the Local Committee included M. H. Irving, H. A. Walsh, T. Rhind, J. Davies M.L.A., E.P.S. Sturt, W. Aitken, C. A. Atkins, J. Buncle, H. Mawbey, and G. M. Hardess. Three new members were elected in 1865 to replace the above committee with the exception of Sturt who continued along with James Bishop, Alexander Edward Short, and James Lamond Kennison, accountant, publican, confectioner respectively.\footnote{No record is extant for the Committee members thereafter.}

Notice of election was placed on the school door. Parents of scholars who had attended during the previous five weeks and subscribers of 10 shillings were entitled to vote at elections.\footnote{Notice of election was placed on the school door. Parents of scholars who had attended during the previous five weeks and subscribers of 10 shillings were entitled to vote at elections. The Committee members supervised and visited Mattingley’s school and furnished periodic reports to the Board of Education. The appointment and dismissal of teachers was their responsibility, subject to the Minister’s approval. Fees were set by the Committee somewhere between the official maximum of 2 shillings and 6 pence per week and the minimum of 9 pence per week. The regulation of the proportion in which the different sources of income were divided between Mr and Mrs Mattingley and their Assistant Teachers fell to the Committee. Finally, the members declared holidays up to a total of 30 days which included Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Whit Monday, Queen’s Birthday, Separation Day, Day of Proclamation of the Constitution Statute and any special occasions proclaimed in the Government Gazette. Teachers suffered reductions in salary for holidays in excess of 30 days.}

All teachers who had been classified under the National Board were entitled, without examination, to a classification equal to that they enjoyed as National School teachers.\footnote{All teachers who had been classified under the National Board were entitled, without examination, to a classification equal to that they enjoyed as National School teachers. Mattingley and his mother taught throughout the Common Schools decade, as did Ellen Bryan. Mr R. W. Sheppard who had entered the National School as a pupil-teacher had advanced to the grand salary of 80 pounds per annum. Jane Bowden, who had been a lowly pupil-teacher with him, remained at her humble rank, receiving 20 pounds per annum for her increasingly experienced services. In similar circumstances were Elizabeth Robertson and Caroline Martin.}

The only staff list extant, that for 1864, reveals that five new members had entered since 1862. A senior teacher, John Spring and Isabella Hughes joined along with the new pupil-teachers, Eleanor Chancellor, Mary Jane Hughes and George Stephen, each receiving an annual salary of 15 pounds. These new members of staff had left by the time the Common School had developed into a State School in 1873.

Following upon recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1866 a new staff-student ratio was introduced in 1868. The allocation of assistant teachers was one for the first 75 scholars in average attendance and an extra one for every additional 50 students in average attendance. One pupil-teacher was allowed for an average attendance of 50 students and an extra pupil-teacher for every additional 25 in average attendance, provided that for every 100 children there was one Assistant.\footnote{To achieve this more stringent ratio the Committee was empowered to select pupil-teachers instead of Assistants as Mattingley’s School was one of the 176 schools licensed for the training of pupil-teachers. His school had easily passed the qualifications for the licence. Mattingley had quite a senior qualification, the children were properly classed and taught, and the timetable, according to current ideals, remained impressive. Inspector Geary reported in 1863 that the timetable “seems to be a great stumbling block to many. They either have none, or if they have one, they do not stick to it. It is quite the exception to find a well-drawn timetable equally well adhered to”. Moreover, order, silence and regularity were effortlessly preserved in the school. Despite serious and blatant overcrowding, the premises were declared suitable for pupil-teacher training as the specification of eight square feet per child was not applied to schools already built.}

The pupil-teachers were regarded as the best source for future teachers and an aid to school work.\footnote{The pupil-teachers were regarded as the best source for future teachers and an aid to school work. Inspector Brown described them as the “most advanced of our scholars, the most intelligent, well-behaved and diligent”. Boys commenced training at 14 years of age while the girls started a year earlier. The original salary range of 10 to 25 pounds per annum was increased in 1868 to 16 to 50 pounds per annum. One third of the cost of pupil-teachers was met by school fees and local contributions.}

Vigilant supervision was exercised over the pupil-teachers in Mattingley’s school. Originally several hours per week out of school hours were devoted to the instruction of the pupil-teachers by Albert and his mother. Gradually six to seven hours per week became the accepted training scheme. In 1868, after three years of agitation by the Board, Mattingley as Head Teacher was entitled to a bonus for his training work while other teachers, as stipulated by the new regulations, received none.

Great excitement stirred the staff at the Errol Street Common School when Albert, the Head Master and founder of the school married one of the humble pupil-teachers of his mother’s Infant Department. Her name was Mary Jane Hayman and she was then 16 years old. Mary Jane had arrived in Melbourne as a young girl in January 1855, three years after the arrival of the Mattingley family. With her on “The Marion Moore” came her father, Philip Hayman, a
bookbinder and her mother and two brothers. They came as unassisted migrants.18

Four years after her arrival, in 1859, Mary Jane entered Mrs Mattingley’s school as a pupil-teacher, earning approximately 12 pounds per annum. Her performance as a pupil-teacher quickly won commendation from her superior, Elizabeth Ann and from the Inspectors. Was it during the training sessions that Albert’s admiration for Mary Jane’s outstanding talent as a young teacher gradually deepened into the staunch love that marked their entire married life? They were married on June 23 1863 at St James Cathedral, Melbourne. To them were born 12 children. The new Mrs Mattingley sustained an impressive teaching career at her husband’s school, carrying on as the head of the Infant Department, upon the retirement of her mother-in-law, right through the early decades of the school’s life as a State School.

Enrolment at the Common School showed an annual increase between 1862-1872. In 1866, for instance, Mattingley’s school was still the largest in Hotham. The next largest school, St Mary’s No 560 had 360 children in attendance while the Hotham School No 307 was patronised by 266 children. In that year 402 children attended the Common School in Errol Street while 418 infants had enrolled in its Infant Section.19 By 1870, (the latest year for which enrolled figures are available) 542 names were on Mattingley’s roll and 495 names on his mother’s roll.20 In view of the size of the schoolrooms it is probably fortuitous that each child only attended the school for an average of 60 percent of the school year.

One new and far-reaching innovation was introduced under Common School legislation which penetrated every aspect of Mattingley’s Common School, marking that phase of school life off from the preceding National School style. The innovation was a system called “Payment by Results” which was copied from English ideas established in 1862 by Robert Lowe.21 In 1863 the Legislative Assembly opposed the new system on the grounds that the English model was tentative and experimental. They feared the moral culture of the children in Common Schools would be eclipsed by the system’s intellectual focus.22 However the advocates, seeking uniformity in the Common Schools, triumphed.

To secure uniformity in examination procedure a paper entitled “Standards of Examination” was issued. These standards defined anticipated levels of achievement at the examinations held twice yearly, by the Inspectors. In 1863, Regulation 16 was introduced. The Mattingleys read that for every scholar who attended one hundred meetings at their school in each half year.

(1) if above seven years of age, eight shillings would be paid to the school subject to his passing an examination in reading, writing, arithmetic, and on passing the above examination, four shillings if he passed the additional examination in grammar and geography under the same standard, viz. two shillings for each.

The requirements were copied from England, but grammar and geography were colonial additions.

(11) if under seven years of age, five shillings subject to forfeiture on a report from the Inspector that such scholars are not instructed suitable to their age.23

Under these regulations the school was paid according to the examination performance of each scholar. At least one concession was made to the school in 1866. A blind boy, George Dangerfield, was excused from the examination.

The children had to progress each year to a higher standard, irrespective of their ability or attendance at the school, which was described by Inspector Brown as an “injusticition”.24 It was this feature which most irked the teachers, especially as the intervals between the six standards were found to be inconsistent. Inspector Orlebar noted that an average child graduated from Standard Two to Three in eight months, whereas it took the average child 44 months to graduate into the Fourth Standard from Third.25 Orlebar noted that the average child never attained the Sixth Standard.26 In 1863, only one out of 124 candidates at the Errol Street School attained the Sixth Standard. However, by 1866, 15 out of 221 candidates were examined in the highest standard.27 The number continued to increase. Although the proportion of the total number of candidates is small,
it appears that at least Mattingley was able to retain and adequately train a few of the bright senior students.

It was sound thinking by the Mattingleys to follow current practice and encourage as many capable scholars as possible to be in attendance on Examination Days. In June 1867, for instance, all the children in Mr and Mrs Mattingley’s rolls were presented for examination.28 Average attendance figures were eclipsed on those days! Seating accommodation had to be stretched to its utmost. Once, in 1865, when Mrs Mattingley happened to have 22 nine year old children who performed creditably, her payment for results and salary were 15 pounds, 13 shillings and 10 pence in excess of the allowable maximum sum derived from doubling the fees and adding the local contributions. So her final results payment was reduced to 20 pounds, 5 shillings and 6 pence. Such deductions could not endear any teacher to the system.

The requirement of the scholars attempting a higher standard each year led to a reshuffling in pupil allocation, which ended one of the earliest features of Mrs Mattingley’s school. Since the opening of her school, she had been obliged to open a Third Class for the girls who accompanied their younger sisters and brothers to school. Later, on, due to lack of space in the Upper Classroom, her Third Class became a permanent feature.

In 1864 she had 137 candidates for examination under seven years and a large group of 183 children aged seven and above. The effect of remaining in the Infant schoolroom is clearly visible. While 116 children could read, their performance in arithmetic was less impressive, and only 11 passed in Grammar and 15 in geography.30 But by 1865, the numbers in her school were depleted by the promotion of 153 of her senior students.31

Somehow, the influx of children was accommodated in Mattingley’s classes. For the Christmas break in 1864, Mattingley dismissed 140 children. Twelve months later he dismissed 306 after a very challenging school year. From then on, the ages of Mattingley’s pupils ranged from eight to 16 years, while most of Mrs Mattingley’s infants were under seven years.

Thus, the single innovation of Payment by Results made its impact on the Errol Street Common School. As with all other Common Schools, the staff saw no incentive to carry their pupils beyond the required pass level as excellent achievement was not detected or rewarded and the time devoted to slow pupils went completely unrewarded if they failed. Whereas under the Board of National Education, Euclid, Algebra, French, Latin and Dancing had been taught at the Errol Street School, the pressure of the standards of examination left little time for these non-examinable extras. It is possibly for this reason that first drawing, and later singing were dropped from the Infant timetable.

Prospects of examination improved slightly in 1868 when children were examined only once each year and instead of relying on the performance of individual candidates, results payments now depended on the proficiency of each class as a whole. The requirement of 100 attendances was reduced to attendance during any part of the five weeks preceding the examination.

But school life was still very much dominated by the Inspector and his examination assessments. Teachers would have had to possess enormous faith and vision to depart from the set subjects and the most reliable methods of achieving the highest pass-rate. To encourage the pupils to embark on their own quests for knowledge would have been folly in view of the “progress” presumed by the standards. Charles Daley recalls of his schooldays in the 1860’s that, “A system of learning by rote and endless simultaneous reiteration prevailed . . . It was a narrow rigid system, wanting in relief, leaving no room for self-expression in the children, or originality in the teacher”.32

Reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography dominated the curriculum. Reading was the most successfully taught subject at the Errol Street School, judging by the consistently high passes obtained in reading in each standard year after year. Spelling and grammar were learnt by rote. Tables were chanted in a sing-song fashion and the sums set for the weekly arithmetic tests were “more remarkable for their size than their educational worth”.33 Rhymes were chanted in unison by the Infants, while set pieces from Byron, Wordsworth, Scott and so on were recited by the older children. “The sections customarily were moralistic and offered a good inducement to melancholia”. Blake comments, “They bore no relationship whatever to the bush country Australian children knew”.34

Payment by Results continued beyond the Common Schools Period. England abolished the practice in 1890. Victoria, however, clung on to the deeply entrenched system until 1902, at which time Mauritius was the only other country still paying teachers by the results of their pupils.35

For 235 days in each school year the children at the Common School studied in overcrowded conditions for the annual examinations. The playgrounds were very limited but Hotham as an area provided many sources of amusement for the children. After school the boys fished in the Moonee Ponds Creek for bream, eels, galaxias and tupong. In the summer months they bathed in the big “Fuse” or the little “Fuse” which were large, deep waterholes in the winding section of the Moonee Ponds Creek. An old sundowner used to camp near the waterholes and the spot was named “Lousy Pat’s Creek”.36

On their way home the children gathered the sweet-tasting manna which exuded from the umbrageous red-gums in the Royal Park. Some of the scholars were in the habit of smoking the porous roots of the wattle trees which, in combination with eating the gum exuding from the wattles, had an upsetting effect on them. The boys hunted the native cats that lived in the gullies and crevices intersecting the Park, for the cats salivated at night to kill the poultry of the residents living near the Park.37 There were large packs of wild goats to chase out of households’ gardens, dairies, bakeries and the markets from which to collect daily supplies, and the steamtrains to admire on the recently laid railway lines.
In December 1867, the colony welcomed its first royal visitor, the Duke of Edinburgh. Scholars performed demonstrations of welcome during school hours, and 13,000 children in Collins Street sang the National Anthem before the royal visitor. The Board reported that "the appearance of the children, uniformly dressed and nearly all decorated with medals, was very satisfactory, and they acquitted themselves with credit." The children at Errol Street cheered at the proclamation of an extra week's holiday on account of the Royal visit.

Thus, the Common School, 1862-1872, developing out of the National School of 1857-1862 continued many founding features, such as ever-increasing enrolment, stable staffing, and the excellent tone of the school. Further legislation in 1872, which arose out of dissatisfaction with the Board of Education created a new system of education whose impact on Mr. and Mrs. Mattingley's school was quite far-reaching.

ABOVE: Account of the school's history by its founder.

LEFT: Early map of Motham with creek. Note that the present buildings stand over the creek.
Emerging Forms, 1873-1923

Bricks and Mortar

Early in 1873, Inspector Sasse informed his Inspector-General, that there were 4000 children in the borough of Hotham, and since the passing of the Act to Amend the Law Relating to Education on 17 December 1872 the education of those aged between six and 15 years had become the responsibility of the recently created Education Department. Under the new legislation, education was to be secular and instruction in the basic subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic was declared free in view of the compulsory clause.

Prior to 1873, when education was voluntary, many children grew up in Hotham without receiving any formal education. Those whose parents could afford the fees could have attended any of several private schools, such as Miss Kennedy's school in Chetwynd Street, or eight local schools which were under the surveillance of the Common Schools Board from 1862-1872. Of these, the pioneer school of the district, St Mary's Church of England School, No 560 had 941 children in attendance in 1871, while the remaining denominational schools between them educated 1755. These were St Michael's Roman Catholic School No 178 in Abbotsford Street, the Congregational School in Chetwynd Street, the Flemington School run by the Independents, the Hotham Presbyterian School No 307, and the Wesleyan's North Melbourne School No 459. From 1873 onwards these schools chose to bypass the new educational authority, the Education Department, and remaining independent and non-vested they evolved their own histories after the discontinuance of capitation allowances to non-vested schools in 1877.

Just over one fifth of the local children attended the Common School No 206 in Errol Street founded by Mrs E. Mattingley and her son, Mr A. Mattingley in 1857-1858. Unlike most of the other Common Schools which were vested, the Mattingley's' schoolrooms were built on their own land at their own expense, and this private ownership of the premises made Common School No 206 a quasi-vested school. Much of the furniture and equipment belonged to the founders although stock had been swelled by the standard issue to schools from the National Schools Board and the Common Schools Board.

By 1873 the Mattingley's' schoolrooms had become hopelessly overcrowded and a larger building was quite obviously a matter of great urgency. As Common School No 206 was automatically declared a state school upon the opening of the Education Department on 1 January 1873 the needs of this thriving and long established school were placed among the earliest considerations of the first Minister of Public Instruction, the Hon. J. Wilberforce Stephen. The main theme of his First Report, 1873, was the provision of schoolrooms to cater for the expected boom in enrolment caused by the compulsory and free clauses of the new Act. The Report explained that the "schools are still greatly overcrowded and no time will be lost in erecting new school houses and in enlarging the old ones when the necessary funds have been provided."

It was fortunate for Mattingley and the Hotham children that the need for a new school in the district stood undisputed and that a site was chosen, surveyed, reserved and gazetted 18 July 1873 at a time when the funds voted for public instruction for 1873-1874 were still unspent. While many country settlements at the time were wholly unprovided with schools the preliminaries were slow in being attended to so that in the meantime "such cases of secondary urgency as presented no impediments to immediate action were pushed on, not in preference to nor to the prejudice of the others, but simply as being the most important that it was possible to deal with at the time. Had they been omitted, a certain proportion of the vote for 1873-1874 would have lapsed. During the Common Schools era from 1862-1872 the majority of funds went to the building of Common Schools in the country so that the city schools were genuinely requiring maintenance or enlargement by 1873.

In May 1873 the Minister invited the submission from local architects of competitive designs for new State School buildings. General standards of size, material and cost were set down in his "Instructions to Architects." The rooms were to be 20 feet wide and up to 60 feet in length. Walls were to be of brick and of an economical nature. Roofs were to be of slate, and suitable lavatories and out-offices were to be
provided. Little concern was displayed for the educational function for which the buildings were being designed. "The area allowed for each pupil should be about 10 square feet... the schoolrooms may be lighted from behind the children when seated in their classes," and "ventilation should be under thorough control." The Minister dutifully recommended general economy in plans and he required a fairly immediate response as plans were to be submitted a mere six weeks later. The adjudicators, Melbourne architects Terry and Webb chose the design submitted by Wharton and Vickers, architects of 18 Collins Street, for the proposed State School in Hotham. It is not known how many other designs were considered. The cost of erecting the Hotham School was 9751 pounds, 10 shillings and from the 5 percent commission, Wharton and Vickers earned 467 pounds, 11 shillings. Their design was the inspiration for the design of state schools built elsewhere in Victoria.

It was 15 months before Hotham's new State School was ready for use and during that time, to alleviate the overcrowding in the Mattingleys' school, the fourth, fifth and sixth classes were taught in "the temporary school" held in the Powder Magazine in the Royal Park. The Powder Magazine had been a familiar landmark to the people of Hotham since 1863 when it was removed to the Royal Park from the western slopes of Batman's Hill, where Spencer Street station now stands.

In an abrupt curtailment of his previous involvement in all aspects of pioneering education in the district, Mattingley was not consulted at any stage about the erection of the new school although it would be attended by his pupils and given his inspiration and organization. Whether this exclusion was a relief or a restriction to which he had to submit has not been recorded, so it is difficult to guess whether he entered his new school on 1 May 1874 with appreciative delight or with secret frustrations about site and design.

Just as the design of the building was an Education Department decision, so too was the choice of site. After alternative sites had been rejected on grounds of heavy traffic, smallness, or cost, the Minister of Public Instruction requested that a Park Reserve of three acres and three roods on the Flemington Road in the Middle Ward of Hotham be granted for educational purposes. In his request to the Department of Lands he emphasized that the site was "urgently needed."

The site had been declared a Park Reserve in 1854, two years after the 565 acres composing Hotham had been opened for sale. Due to the fall of the land on the site deep gullies ran north to south and the Reserve "was allowed to be made acceptable for all sorts of filling and filth, which had become a nuisance to the neighbourhood." Thus, the gullies had been filled and levelled and from 1868-1873 the Reserve had been cared for by gardeners. A fence of white Hawthorn had been planted at his own expense, by Mr Barwise, several times Mayor. The creek which ran through the site was walled with bluestone forming a stormwater channel. Hotham's surveyor believed there would be no difficulty in obtaining the site, but when the Government placed a temporary reserve on it for a State School in the Gazette of 18 July 1873 objections were immediately raised.

Preoccupied with the procedures and expense of setting up municipal services, and over-sensitive about local and State spheres of power and responsibility, the Borough Councillors were outraged by the Government's decision. Councillor Clarke viewed the move as "contemptible and mean", a direct insult to the Council. Councillor Carroll declared that the Government was attempting to "ride rough-shod over them." The Mayor, epitomising the preoccupation of local loyalty in the face of State-wide provision of education, announced that he believed "the Government in bringing into existence the Education Act were (sic) bound to provide suitable sites for State Schools, and not to take the municipal reserves the property of the burgesses."

And so, late in August 1873, Councillors Carroll, White, Foggarty and Clarke formed a spirited deputation, led by the Mayor, to voice their strong objections.

However, the Crown Lands Department considered the community's need for recreation amply provided for by the adjoining Royal Park, thereby negating the Mayor's arguments. The Borough Council was reimbursed 138 pounds for the cost of fencing and 65 pounds for the cost of grass seeds. The Council upheld its objection, refusing to accept the sum of 200 pounds as the final reasonable reimbursement until 24 March 1876, by which time it was obvious that the school building was to occupy the site, permanently and the Education Department could not be further assailed. In vain they had claimed that improvements to the site had cost the Council 621 pounds 14 shillings.

Once construction had commenced on the site, the Secretary of the Education Department received another form of objection by way of the following letter from the Central Board of Health,

As there can be no doubt that the placing of a large schoolroom in such a position (directly over the Royal Park drain) must be highly prejudicial to the health of the children in attendance... I strongly advise that some other position be found for the school in question — Regulations advise that all school buildings be kept as far as is practicable from drains and sewers.

But this objection, which accurately foresaw one source of problems later encountered, was raised too late. The Education Department was unlikely to abandon the work already started and recommence the search for an alternative site in view of the pressures of its state-wide building commitment, especially in view of the urgent needs for immediate accommodation of Hotham's large school-aged population.

The Education Department replied that between the drain and the school floor would be a layer of filling, 10 feet thick. Rather naïvely it was added that the drain was "almost entirely a channel for clean water the natural drainage of the valley above." It was not until 1886, after a disastrous record of ineffectual piecemeal improvement that the Education Department admitted that the school was "awkwardly situated."

The 10 feet of filling, however, had not been authorised for health reasons but upon construction advice given by the architects who, on directing ex-
cavations for the foundations, in October 1873, discovered that the "earth (has) been filled in to such an extent as to involve a large amount of additional foundation." They also advised that from the position of the site it will be necessary to raise the floor-level to the height of the side streets and to fill in the ground. The open drain running through the school they continued "should also be covered, at least as far as the building extends." It was declared that "if the site is improved to this extent it would become very valuable." The remedy sounded easy and the result very inviting and it seems these two factors beguiled the education authorities.

The school was to be built in a hollow which had been the swampy drainage bed for the creek whose outlet was in the West Melbourne swamp which at that stage covered an area of 75 acres until it was drained by the Government in 1879. A rough bridge once crossed the creek to facilitate traffic along Flemington Road but later the water was directed into a bluestone tunnel which runs under Park Street, under Flemington Road, right down the middle of the school grounds and out along Harris Street.

Deep gullies running north-south resulted from the lie of the land, and despite being filled in by the Council, they reappeared, exposing the bluestone drain and ruining the school's playing areas. On three sides the unmade roads were considerably higher so that water draining off Flemington Road, Harcourt Street and Murphy Street washed quickly down the 12 to 15 feet drop to saturate the school grounds lying below, quite often in a boggy state. Besides, disastrous floods had occurred in the vicinity in 1864 and again in 1870 when the floodwaters came up Harris Street as far as Curzon Street.

In view of the drainage pattern it is difficult to understand why the school was built right on the lowest lying point of the hollow. It is highly likely that the building was designed without any regard to the future site, but based on the hypothetical site outlined in the suggestions to architects. — "The ground may be assumed to be level, 12 inches above street gutter, and with a foundation at three feet below surface." Silt and refuse carried by the storm water constantly blocked the drain right in front of the buildings, causing the accumulation of stagnant pools of water and dampness which created heartbreaking deterioration of the foundations and superstructure only months after the school was opened.

The task of improving the site was sub-contracted to Overend and Robb, of 15 Collins Street West, who, for 205 pounds agreed to fill up the inside of the foundation walls of the northern wing to a depth of within 18 inches of the floor, and to supply material and fill up any necessary filling outside at the rate of three shillings per cubic yard. The need for drainage did not receive equal consideration with the obvious solution of filling. Shortly before the school was opened, however, Owen and Ford of Carlton, constructed a pitched drain with cess-pits to deliver into the main drain to provide drainage from Murphy and Harcourt Streets.

On 30 April 1874 State School 206 in Errol Street and the temporary school in the Powder Magazine ceased to function. On 22 April, in specially hired carts, hât-rails, desks, benches and galleries were removed from the schools to the new school, and several days later, new benches, chairs and book presses were delivered from Oldfield and Lindley along with a parcel containing 70 dozen hat and coat hooks.

In just over a week the whitewashed interior was equipped and furnished, with desks and galleries screwed into position, and without any break in their schooling, the pupils from State School 206 were summoned to their new school by the ringing of the bell in its new belfry on 1 May 1874. The initial foot-
steps of the curious and excited pupils set the pattern of experience for their own school life and that of their successors: to disguise the muddy nature of the grounds it was found necessary to spread 90 loads of "a little dry stuff for the paths."32

Sophisticated ceremonies to mark the opening of State schools tended to develop later, and as no record survives of any formal celebrations it is highly likely that only the procedures of settling in took place that day. On the same day, Hotham residents may have observed the opening of the new horse, cow and pig market. However neither event was of sufficient importance to be mentioned the following year in the North Melbourne Almanac.33 The colonial English were far more interested in remembering the anniversary of the Duke of Wellington's birth on 1 May 1875, than they were the first anniversary of two important community centres.

Although the school continued to be described as "Mattingley's school", its official name was Flemington Road State School, Hotham. Within a fortnight of the school's opening however, its Head Teacher, suggested the name which has identified the school to the present day. In a letter to the Secretary of the Education Department he wrote, "I have the honor (sic) to inform you that this school faces Errol Street, the principal street in Hotham. The back is some distance from the Flemington Road from which there is no entrance. From these circumstances I respectfully suggest the desirability of changing the name of this school from Flemington Road to Errol Street No 1402 as I think its present one has a tendency to mislead the public as to its situation.34

From the point of view of external appearance the new school buildings were indeed a worthy acquisition for a district which had not yet been declared a Town but which was growing with amazing rapidity. In 1873, the Mayor boasted that "No borough around Melbourne had progressed in anything like the same rate as Hotham."35 The beautiful Royal Park lay opposite the school which could be easily seen as very few houses had yet been built in Murphy or Harcourt Streets.36 Nearby, Arden Street was a quagmire and O'Shanassy Street was bare of dwellings as it had not yet been formed.37 Houses of stone, brick and iron had replaced the timber dwellings and tents first erected. The gardens that householders and the school had managed to create were frequently ruined overnight by the packs of goats that ran loose.

Other imposing buildings were scattered over the Borough. Visible from the bay was the impressive facade of the Benevolent Asylum on the West Melbourne boundary.38 Built on the crest of a hill the North Melbourne Hotel in Howard Street was a "conspicuous landmark."39 Nearby stood St Mary's Church of England bluestone church which looked across to the bluestone Presbyterian church replaced in 1879 with the present building. Between the two churches stood the original red brick Town Hall, then 11 years old. State School 1402 thus preceded the erection of other well-known landmarks such as the Metropolitan Meat Market, the gasonometer, St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, and the magnificent Town Hall with its clearly visible spire which was opened two years after the school.

Observers at the time were most impressed by the new State School. It was described in the North Melbourne Advertiser as "the best school erected by the Education Department."40 Comment referred with emphasis to the seating capacity of 1250 children. In comparison to the overcrowded schoolrooms previously available and in view of the steady growth of the district this pride is understandable. The four other schools in Hotham mentioned in the Minister's Report for 1875 were still being conducted in small rented buildings.41 Most other schools built at the time had a smaller capacity. In 1874, there were only six schools in the State with a seating capacity of 1000. Errol Street, Sandridge, Albert Park and Gold Street Collingwood schools were the largest schools in Melbourne while the gold towns of Beechworth and Sandhurst boasted the remaining two.42

In true Victorian fashion comments focussed on the building's appearance. Eighteen months after the opening of the school the North Melbourne Advertiser described the building as "undoubtedly one of the finest in the colony... with handsome stone and brick facings... with nicely varnished and well-ventilated ceilings."43 By contrast, another State School in the district, No 307 in Queensberry Street was condemned by Inspector Brodribb, "The present premises are draughty, unhealthy and in a ruinous condition, while their accommodation is so limited that classes have to be taught in turn either in the porch or in the open air."44 The appearance of school buildings seemed to be a vital consideration in choice of school by the parents. Zoning was not introduced with compulsory attendance and many parents foresaw the older schools when the Errol Street School was opened. To help
It was not until 1906 that the Education Department began to contemplate the re-arranging of rooms to obtain better lighting.52 As far as was practicable the classrooms were to be re-seated to allow the light to fall from the left. Roller blinds were provided at long last to take over the function of the frosting. The removal of the galleries that had become too dangerous for use also increased the natural lighting.

The original design then provided rooms that were sombre, noisy and poorly ventilated. Although the neat appearance of the pupils always caught the attention of visitors, in the days before household showings and baths were commonplace, the ventilation for a school housing over 1000 children was quite inadequate. Visitors and inspectors commented on the stuffy atmosphere, especially in the crowded rooms. The Hon. G. M. Prendergast declared in the Legislative Assembly that “the architects of a few years ago might have prided themselves on the fact that they knew how to design a Gothic window, but they did not seem to understand what was necessary in the shape of fresh air for the children. In many instances the architecture has to be spoiled to provide ventilation.”53

Apart from the utterly essential maintenance works which quickly developed, the school had to continue to work within the framework laid out by Watson and Vickers. In 1907 as a preliminary move to remodelling, lighting was enriched, four large rooms were divided by screens which gave some sense of individuality to the class group without however achieving adequate heating or sound reduction. Wall blackboards were also supplied to replace the easel blackboards. These preliminary improvements cost 2000 pounds.54

It took 40 years of concerted agitation to achieve the signing of a contract to remodel the building to bring it in line with the educational and sanitary ideas of the time. Teachers, the members of the Board of Advice, inspectors and local parliamentary representatives all urged renovation.

Early in 1908 immediately after the preliminary renovations were completed, Mr Drummond as Head Teacher urged thorough internal and external renovations.55 The following year in the School’s Special Report on Buildings, Inspector J. W. Bothroyd recommended the removal of the remaining galleries and the improvement of bad lighting facilities.56 Similar suggestions were repeated 12 months later from the compelling pen of J. McRae who declared that “the accommodation in the junior school is both unsuitable and inadequate. The pupils have to sit in galleries and desks of the old type, crowded together most uncomfortably. More and better accommodation is urgently required. The lighting of many rooms is very bad indeed.”57

Inspector Gates made frequent reports during 1911 urging action. On the long list of schools in his district deserving of prompt attention he placed Errol Street 1402 second.58 At the same time the members of the School Committee, with a confident and visionary style wrote regular letters to the Education Department urging works and urgent prompt action.

Early in 1912 a complete scheme of remodelling was prepared. The cost of the scheme, 13,000 pounds
was the cause of its remaining as words and lines upon papers shelved in files. The authorities believed that a new school for 1000 children could be built for less. In 1913, several more abortive schemes were submitted, but it was not until August 1914 that the Education Department decided to request an amended scheme which would halve the costs of the initial proposals. The Minister promised to visit the school when the new plans were available. Reports of the urgency of action were sustained throughout these negotiations by every group connected with the school.

At this critical stage of planning the school was indeed fortunate to have as its champion the Hon. George Michael Prendergast, M.L.A. Then an energetic politician in his sixties, he had held the seat of North Melbourne since 1894, having previously acted as the inaugural secretary of the Victorian Labour Party upon its formation in 1892. From 1904 to 1913 and mostly thereafter he led the Labour Party, and ten years after promoting the Errol Street renovations he became Premier and Treasurer. He continued as an active Labour M.P. until his death in 1937.

Many earlier requests from Errol Street had been taken up by Prendergast, but on this occasion his reputation for honest and enthusiastic commitment, his known concern for the school and a fluent and impelling outburst in the Legislative Assembly were decisive. Having received an indefinite reply to his question of 13 August enquiring into the stage of completion of the plans for remodelling, his impatience burst forth,

"I have been waiting for years to have some improvements effected in the Errol Street school," he proclaimed. "I have had promises from three different Ministers that certain alterations would be carried out, but nothing has been done. There have been a number of reports and certain communications have passed between the Education Department and the Public Works Department. The condition of things in that school is such as to demand immediate attention in the interests of the health of the children, but not the slightest alteration has been made." In a threatening voice he concluded, "I think it is about time that my patience was exhausted."

Prendergast’s depleted patience seemed to be more effective than years of letters, reports, interviews and the deteriorating buildings themselves. A fortnight later the plans for remodelling were hustled into the Director’s office and eleven days later, Prendergast’s fury could be assuaged with the notifications of official approval of the Errol Street State School renovations.

The approved scheme, costing 4900 pounds, was to create an improved school for 774 children seated in new dual desks. The large rooms were subdivided, air vents were installed, chimneys modernised, and larger windows, with roller blinds replaced the original Gothic windows. The ramps and paths were tarpaved and 1000 loads of filling were supplied.
Eighteen rooms, more serviceable and pleasant, were thus created.

During the seven months period of renovation in 1915 temporary accommodation was rented in the neighbourhood. Some 380 children were housed at the Howard Street Methodist buildings, 240 at St Mary's Church of England new hall, and the remainder at the Brougham Street Methodist Hall. Pianos, organs and pictures had to be stored, while the indispensable furniture was moved to the rented premises. On 25 January 1915 the children resumed the school year scattered in the temporary schools.

By the end of July, the seventh and eighth grade children were able to return to the remodelled buildings while the lower classes remained in their temporary schools for an extra three weeks until their new dual desks arrived to replace their long benches and desks many of which had come from the National School No 206 and whose battered condition never failed to inspire strong comments from the Building In-

Original south facade and belltower.

Remodelling School No 140
Errol St North Melbourne

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[Diagram of school layout]
spectators. The new dual desks were varnished by members of the School Committee in preparation for the Official Reopening Ceremony.

By August, 1915 the scholars and staff were united once again and the remainder of the year was spent in establishing a school routine in the improved surroundings.

As Prendergast had advised that “owing to the unrest in political circles it would be unwise to have the official opening until matters became more settled,” the official ceremony was not held until 26 February 1916.

Local councillors, clergymen and businessmen joined the parents and children assembled in front of the school. Guests included prominent local businessmen Messrs Leeming, Hadow, McMasters, Fitzgerald and Simpson. A telling and the most instructive speech was given by the Minister of Public Instruction. Prendergast delighted in speaking for the occasion which represented for him a culmination of his efforts on behalf of the school. Mattingley, the school’s founder, who witnessed the ceremony, doubtlessly wished that the better educational arrangements could have been made when he first suggested them almost 40 years earlier. He addressed the children as did Professor Smyth, the current Headmaster, Mr D’Arcy Lear, and the visiting South Australian Director of Education.

Songs and the national anthems of Britain, France and Russia were sung by the scholars and at the conclusion sweets were given to the children while the official visitors adjourned to the Bush School for afternoon tea. The day was described in the minutes of the School Committee as “a pronounced success.”

Free, Secular and Compulsory

When the new State School was opened in Errol Street on 1 May 1874, the problems of overcrowding experienced at Mattingley’s School were forgotten with a grateful sigh of relief. The 1235 children who had been packed into schoolrooms designed in 1859 for one third the number, could now stretch out along the benches, in separate classrooms.

THE FIRST PUPILS

A large core of pupils who had enrolled at State School 208 transferred to the new school, bringing with them affection for their teachers, a record of steady academic progress and an acceptance of the discipline required of those who undertook study under the regime of annual examination.

Most of the parents of the first pupils were involved in occupations which reveal the boom nature of Hotham in the seventies. The range of occupations was wide and the rate of employment high, judging by the low number of a dozen children who came from homes where the breadwinner was unemployed. The social origins of the children emerge from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drovers, Carters, Carriers</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchers</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicans</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonemasons</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builders</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other groups represented were those whose occupations related to basic service industries for the locality. A miller, millwright, cooper, ropemaker, candlemaker, woodcutter, and a gingerbeer maker enrolled their children. Several bakers, sawyers and brewers patronised the school. It seems that very few families relied on the mother as a wage-earner, although the names of a haircurler, a manglewoman and one charwoman appear on the first Register of Pupils’ Names. The children of the toll-collector and of the essential nightman attended alongside those of the firemen and policemen. A goldbeater, tinsmith, and a coppersmith had children at the school. It seems
that the steady employment and moderate incomes of these parents were married to an ambition for their children to utilize the free education which had become available.

Hotham’s proximity to the docks and the Bay is illustrated by those parents who were mariners, sea captains, shipwrights, shipkeepers and carpenters, raftsmen and lightermen. Some were fishermen, one was an oyster merchant, and one was a stevedore.

The new source of employment provided by the extension of railway services is reflected in the fathers who were enginemen, gangers, pointsmen, guards, railway inspectors, and a ticket collector.

The proximity of livestock and associated industries and the reliance on horses for transport is revealed in the following group: a cowkeeper, saddler, groom, coachmaker, horseeader, blacksmith, fellmonger, tanner, hide merchant, woolsorter, tallow melter and slaughterman.

While most fathers were locally employed, five described themselves as diggers, one as a droper and several as farmers.

Despite friction between the Education Department and the Town Hall, both the Mayor and the Town Clerk sent their daughters to the State School. In the Council’s rancour with the Board of Advice it was the Mayor who urged a co-operative solution. The Town Clerk had to conduct the correspondence of complaint at the seizure of the site for the school.

One “Lady” and one “Gentleman” preferred Mattingley’s State School to the private schools. An evangelist, nurse, midwife, pianist, soldier and court bailiff each sent a daughter. Several children came from teaching parents, including the Headmaster’s children. Accountants, clerks and surveyors enrolled their daughters. It is highly likely that the children of these parents were taught to value education and were encouraged and assisted in their progress.

FREE EDUCATION

In its early years the Education Department was so preoccupied with the overwhelming task of providing school buildings that “Free” education was not ushered in by curriculum innovation. Instead it merely provided instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, drill and needlework. The Minister explained in his first Report that “It has not been thought desirable to make any considerable and sudden changes in the course of instruction in the schools . . . any radical changes introduced at a time when a large accession of new, and for the most part un instructed, scholars was to be expected would have greatly increased the difficulties of the teachers.”

Despite his assurance that changes would occur as occasion arose no substantial improvements were introduced until the era of Frank Tate.

In this respect Errol Street State School was more fortunate than many other schools. Its Headmaster, having already taught for seventeen years a wider curriculum continued to timetable extra subjects for which weekly fees were charged. For Latin and French the fee was one shilling, for Euclid, Algebra and trigonometry, sixpence, and mensuration, bookkeeping and natural science cost threepence per week. A visiting master gave lessons in the pianoforte. Pupils intended for the professions or mechanical trade could thus receive the requisite preparation. “We are glad to perceive”, wrote the North Melbourne Advertiser, that Mr. Mattingley places within the reach of all pupils, for a very trifling outlay, education of a superior, yet absolutely necessary kind to enable them to creditably enter the ranks of professions and trades . . . a youth can receive quite as good an education as could be obtained for treble the amount in a French or German college.” In 1876, having observed the school’s performance for several years, the local paper boasted that “The inhabitants of North Melbourne may . . . congratulate themselves upon having one of the finest buildings and best conducted schools in the Southern Hemisphere.”

SECULAR EDUCATION

Although the Act of 1872 provided free secular and compulsory education, religious instruction out of school hours was permitted for children of consenting parents. However, many people believed that only secular education had been sanctioned by the new legislation. So it was not surprising that in May 1874, the incumbent of St. Mary’s Anglican Church encountered hostility in attempting to provide religious instruction in Hotham’s State Schools. Despite having sought the approval of the Board of Advice, the Headmasters and the Minister he was accused by local people of endeavouring “to pervert the Education Act.”

First names entered on the State School Register, 1874.
Boys’ roll was similar.
replied that, "There has been from the first to last neither breach nor evasion of the law. All that I ask for religion is a fair field and no favour." Mr Mattingley remained independent, but wished Mr Potter's cause well.

In 1886 the outlook of the Board of Advice had been clarified and in unison with the prevailing attitude the Board agreed unanimously that "the reading of the Bible in State Schools should be enforced." Prior to this date, all religious passages had been expunged from textbooks used in State Schools. In 1896, the Board agreed to the insertion, in the new edition of school books, of the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount.  

**COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

In the months following the school's opening in May 1874, 550 children surged through the new picket gates and across the muddy approaches in search of admission. For many children, State School 1402 was the first school they had entered. Many families responded to the free and compulsory education as might a child obliged to attend a carnival, but with free passes to each attraction. Parents and scholars were determined to sample all the available facilities, gathering up their slates and bonnets and forsaking one school in favour of another for almost capricious reasons. Such behaviour, however, was not created by the 1872 Act. In 1888, for instance, one Inspector reported to the Board of Education for Common Schools that many children attended more than one school each year. He listed as the principal causes, "the caprice of parents and children... and the simple love of change - the alterations which take place from time to time in the staffs of teachers and in the nature of the buildings... which frequently affect the efficiency and popularity of the schools."  

The new State School was such an appealing edifice in a borough otherwise relying for school buildings and overcrowded rented premises. Mr Madden, Headmaster of State School 307 in Queensberry Street, reported that about this time many of his pupils left due to "the attractions of the new schools." About 10 of his pupils were on the Register for 1876.

Although the Minister of Public Instruction recognized the undesirable practice of wandering from school to school he was unable to check it. The expedient of zoning had not by then been invented. In 1877, 13.5 percent of all State School children attended more than one school and in the next year the number enrolled in two schools had increased by 3 percent.

A number of different enrolment patterns could be discerned. In the first place, of the girls enrolled at Errol Street in 1876 for instance only 36 had not attended any other school. With the exception of one 11-year-old, the others were too young to have tried out another school, being only two or three years of age. Country schools accounted for eight transfers, one girl had come from Tasmania and one from Ireland.

The remainder of the girls forming the intake of 1876 had previously attended nearby schools. Girls came from Mr Neil's school in Carlton, Mr Templeton's, Fitzroy, Mr Doria's school in the Trades Hall, as well as from schools in Collingwood, Richmond, Emerald Hill, South Yarra and Sandridge. It is noticeable that no girls transferred from the two main Roman Catholic schools in 1876, St Michael's and St Mary's which survived the loss of their capitation tax in 1875, the Catholics of Hotham having raised sufficient funds to ensure their continuance. Moreover, the Reverend Mr England visited Catholic families in the locality and "induced many of them to send their children to St Mary's who had hitherto sent them to State schools." Mr Madden wrote of his transfer from St Mary's school to State School 307 that 30 Catholic children followed him, "notwithstanding the vigilance and strong opposition of the catholic clergymen." Eleven girls had previously attended Mr Gilchrist's Wesleyan school which was being conducted in seriously overcrowded rooms. Three girls transferred to Errol Street from the local private schools conducted by Miss Dangerfield, Miss Kennedy and Mrs Clayton. The successful continuance of these private schools, as judged by their sustained enrolments, partly explains why the new State school was not immediately filled to capacity.

**EARLY ATTENDANCE PATTERNS**

The attendance of the new children in 1874 was erratic and undisciplined resulting in a lowering in the level of average attendance. It was not until 1879 that the actual attendance at the new State school, with its swollen enrolment, exceeded the attendance at the old State School, No 206. Such a decline in attendance was a state-wide phenomenon which the Minister of Public Instruction believed "was attributable to the irregular habits of the large number of undisciplined children then for the first time brought into schools."  

The free and compulsory education drew in many families who had no insight into the habits required to sustain attendance. Seventeen girls, for instance, enrolled and left Errol Street 1402 during its first month. It would have been a thrilling victory for the new legislation had it succeeded in winning commitment from these families. As it was, a dressmaker's 13-year-old daughter, for instance, was placed in the second class amid eight year olds. She did not return after her enrolment day. Placed in the first class was the daughter of a scavenger who attended only two and a half meetings. At the age of ten years and a half she was not won over by the environment of the first class.

The habit of steady attendance was difficult to acquire. Some pupils turned up only occasionally in the winter months of 1874, but became more enthusiastic as spring and summer came around. Many became steady pupils the following year, attending twice as often. Children who eventually studied at the school

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until they had reached the highest class had often been erratic in their early attendance. Six months, or even a year would elapse when children did not attend at all, but by the following year their attendance was regular.

Only one girl managed to attend 81 meetings during the school's initial half-year. Several attended 70 sessions, and four managed 50. About half of the pupils attended for between 20 to 30 sessions while the rest turned up from one to 19 times.

While caprice and lack of discipline were very influential factors in the irregular response to the free and compulsory education, considerations of public health must also be borne in mind.

The low-lying swampland tract on the western boundary of Hotham was definitely drained. Emanations from cess-pits and closets were local disgraces, while slaughter-houses, tanneries, piggeries and fowlhouses further polluted the district. Many workingmen's cottages were overcrowded and unhealthy. In fact the North Melbourne Advertiser drew attention to the insanitary conditions of the cottages which were built on damp earthen floors, poorly ventilated, with dusty damp wallpapers and closets close to bedrooms and kitchens. Under these conditions epidemics assumed fearful proportions unknown to the present generation.

In his Report for 1874 the Minister of Public Instruction explained that "the unusual prevalence of diphtheria, scarlatina and typhoid fever has considerably checked the rise in Average Attendance." A similar effect was attributable the following year to "a dreadful visitation of measles." With sparse medical control of common infections the fear of being exposed to infection at school was real enough to excuse some irregularity of attendance.

The effects of the influx of the new pupils were most felt by the teachers. The newcomers had first to be classified. Teachers were expected to educate children of minimum experience and achievement whose ages exceeded the average class age. Special advice and equipment were not issued. The teachers' available skills and resources were expected to suffice.

Irregular attendance bedevilled hints of progress. Only 12 months were allowed to teachers to work out the backward scholars to the examination standards. That is, for 1873 teachers received their results payment of 1872, unless their pupils happened to gain a higher percentage. With the annual examination as inevitable and searching as ever, the lot of the class teacher was not an easy one. Inspector Sasse was fortunately aware of the disruption caused by the new scholars and he graciously acknowledged in his Report that teachers "have cheerfully endeavored (sic.) to overcome all difficulties and have succeeded in maintaining a high standard of instruction." He commended them for their care, attention and energy.

During the years 1873-1874 the general proficiency of the school, as judged by the inspectors percentage for examination, declined. But while the mark for 1873 of 73 percent was low in comparison to the school's previous percentages, Errol Street was still far ahead of the average percentage for the whole state of 58 percent. By 1875, Errol Street's mark had jumped to 84 percent which indicates how quickly the school stabilised despite the disruptions of the increased enrolment, of moving to new premises, and irregular attendance. By 1876, Inspector Sasse awarded the mark of 91 percent which was repeated by the school, year after year, often with an increase.

TRUANCY

While the new legislation encouraged many families to participate in education, it did not establish effective machinery for the enforcement of compulsory enrolment and attendance. The legislators preferred to offload the difficult task onto the newly created Boards of Advice.

Thus, many Hotham children, referred to as "gutter children" remained beyond the school's ambit. Their earning capacity was too valuable for the parents to encourage them to avail themselves of the free and compulsory education. Of such parents the local newspaper wrote in disgust in 1886, "the very persons for whose benefit this (Act) was placed on the Statute book ungraciously refuse to accept it. Parents who deny their children the advantages afforded by the Education Act, show an unnatural disregard for the interests of their own flesh and blood, and as for their faculties for appreciating gratuitous benefits, they must be as dormant as those of the wasteful housewife in the German fable, who used heaven's gift of 'daily bread' to form a footway across the dirty street."

Inspector Elkington's description of such children in 1869 could have been repeated in 1874. "Dwelling amid every variety of circumstances that poverty, hunger and dirt can assume, these unhappy children constantly demonstrate that our school system is not yet quite perfect." Of the situation in Hotham a reporter impatiently wrote in 1876 that "the gutter children are as numerous and as great a nuisance as ever. As long as these street arabs are permitted to indulge in vicious habits and grow up in ignorance the free education scheme will remain a failure." Certainly larrkinism increased during the seventies. School property was constantly damaged and stolen. It would be interesting to know whether the vandalism was committed by these "street arabs" or by the children who enrolled at the school but failed to identify with it.

A local reporter asked of Hotham, "Why does not the Board of Advice make a clean sweep of the streets and enforce the compulsory clause?" In view of the ample accommodation the writer of another article advised that "The Hotham Board of Advice should certainly take steps without delay to compel parents to send their children to school... Many boys and girls are at present running wild about the streets who would be much better off in school." The members of the Board visited parents and distributed circulars to exhort the children to enrol. A policeman acted as the summoning officer who summoned and prosecuted defaulting parents. In 1876 the Board applied for the appointment of a Truant Officer. A. Ross was appointed for the districts of
Hotham, Brunswick, Essendon, Flemington and Coburg. In liaison with the Truant Officer, the Board of Advice decided upon whom to serve summonses. Fines imposed by local magistrates for the cases of indefensible neglect exposed were regrettably lenient. In March 1884, of the 70 cases of truancy in North Melbourne, 35 cases were “gutter-children” taken from the streets, while the names of the other half appeared on the school lists. At the next meeting of the Board the Truant Officer reported that he had investigated a further 350 cases. The Board ordered that 77 of these children be summoned, 61 were fined from 1 shilling to 5 shillings each and 10 were cautioned.

The Minister realised that “The prospect of being fined one shilling or two for keeping his son from school has too often no deterrent effect on the parent to whom the value of the lad’s services is represented by many times that amount.” The North Melbourne press referred scathingly to the eccentricities of the genial gentlemen who, acting as local magistrates, regarded with “glances of deep compassion those parents (1) who were willing to let their offspring’s mind remain in degrading ignorance, in order that they might grind money out of their bodies.” As an example a case was cited of a boy kept from school as he could earn 15 shillings weekly. The mother “preferred to consult her present to the child’s future.” The fine of half a crown, described as farcical by the press, was triumphantly flung down by the parent as she left the court “snapping her fingers in the mortified Inspector’s face.”

In 1889 the Board of Advice was infuriated by the record of lenient fines which hovered at the low range between 2 shillings and 6 pence and 5 shillings. Some of the delinquents had only attended four times out of 60. It was the Board’s avid belief that “any parent whose children did not attend 30 times out of 60 was guilty of a great injustice and deserved punishment.” During debate on fining it was suggested that “Parliament should so amend the act that the birch might be reasonably impressed on the notice of the youngsters” to cure such glaring cases of non-attendance.

Truancy continued to be a grave concern to the education authorities and a major and time-consuming activity of the Board of Advice. Professor Austin considers that, “in practice, opposition to the compulsory clauses was so strong... and the machinery for enforcing them so weak, that no colony could be said to have had an effective compulsory system until the twentieth century.”

Albert Mattingley, 1874-1895
(The First Twenty-One Years)

The opening of the Errol Street State School 1402 on 1 May 1874 marked only the change of premises, not the founding of a State school. Mattingley’s Common School 206 had been automatically declared a State School (No 206) on 1 January 1873. The school already 17 years old had triumphantly emerged from its pioneering initiation. The palatial new buildings in Errol Street were set immediately to life by the inherited traditions brought into it by a core of teachers and pupils from State School 206. From such a steady assured beginning there developed a tradition of such strength and vitality that it is still perceived by visitors to the school in 1974, and it is cherished by past staff members and pupils. While the quintessence of such a tradition cannot be expressed in words it can be borne in mind in considering the school’s achievement during its first century.

Albert Mattingley, the co-founder of the original school, was the Headmaster of the new State school for its first 21 years. One of his pupils, recalls him as “a fine looking man, straight and tall.” He was a familiar figure in Hotham dressed in his long-tailed coat and silk top-hat, and carrying a walking stick “which was exchanged when on duty for a longer stick of another colour and distinction.” He was a man of great dignity, of absolute justness in all his dealings. While his demeanour was customarily stern and strict, his alert clear eyes bespoke his integrity, and behind his moustache and beard were lips accustomed to quiet merriment.

The Chief Inspector’s predictions of Mattingley’s promise made in 1858 had stood the test of time. An abundance of inspiration, vision and enthusiasm is discernable throughout his career. At no time during his 36 years of teaching did he receive other than words of commendation and praise. Visiting members of the Board of Advice and Inspectors customarily spoke of the school’s excellent tone. The Senior Inspector, Brodribb, echoed many similar comments when he wrote, “The discipline in all classes was perfect. I have seldom been in any school where such order was maintained.” Even during unscheduled visits the inspectors congratulated Mattingley on the tone, appearance and conduct of his pupils and on the excellent discipline and instruction.

As a stern disciplinarian Mattingley brooked no nonsense. One past pupil boasts that he has “been across Mr Mattingley’s knees more times than I have fingers and toes.” His pupils could not fail to respect and revere him as an Upholder of discipline. Not seeking to rend the bond between the school and its founder, the Education Department granted Albert promotion without transfer. At his retirement in 1895, after 36 years of teaching his name stood at the top of the Triennial Roll of teachers.

When he died at the age of 86 it was with abundant reason that the press claimed that “North Melbourne loses a valuable citizen and one of the first of its progressive pioneers.” He was buried alongside other members of the family, in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

His task at State School 1402 was greatly eased by the stability of his staff, many of whom had already taught under him for many years. Three teachers had served with Mattingley during the National phase of the school (1858-1862), Elizabeth, his mother, had conducted the Infant Department since she founded it in 1857. Her continued presence at 1402 as First Assistant ensured continuity and efficiency in the Infant Department. She retired in 1879 after a fascinating career in teaching. Ellen Bryan, the Second Assist-
1877 that the extra subjects were not popular because the children lacked sufficient opportunity for doing extra exercise. The children did not improve. In 1881 Ware reported that the children in his district rarely passed beyond the most elementary work. At Errol Street, Mattingley taught algebra, French, Euclid, Latin and mensuration. His pupils progressed steadily in all subjects except mensuration which was a common phenomenon. In 1886 Curlewis declared of algebra and mensuration that "unless the boys give more time and show more zeal, I do not see much use in continuing these subjects." Book-keeping, generally a more popular subject, was satisfactorily taught by Mr Burston.

Periodical and systematic lessons on morals and manners were introduced into the "secular" curriculum in 1884 in the belief that "truthfulness and honesty, kindness, reverence and industry ought to be as directly taught as reading, writing and arithmetic." It was believed that the character and conduct of State school children would be elevated by such instruction.

Occasional health and temperance lessons were given on topics covering disinfection and ambulance work. The schoolrooms were well endowed with temperance charts as well as a chart depicting human physiology and anatomy.

In 1889 a group of Sixth Class girls from Errol Street attended a course of 17 cookery lessons at the Carlton State School in Queenberry Street. The classes were held in a large ground floor classroom in the Infant School, fitted up as a kitchen, a dining and lecture room, with a scullery in the porch. The food cooked by the girls was sold to the public at 6 pence per serve. The course marked an early attempt at diversifying the curriculum.

In September 1873 at the request of parents and pupils, Mattingley sought permission to conduct Saturday afternoon drawing classes. From 1875 drawing became a free, timetabled subject. In their drawing books, which were inspected, the children drew from models. Blackboard sketches were copied on to slates. Outline form was favoured. The lessons lacked the colour, texture and creativity which is synonymous with art lessons nowadays. Shading, detail and pictorial tendencies were not encouraged.

High musical attainment marked the school's first 21 years. Of the 1878 inspection of music Summers wrote, "Every care and attention was given to the subject, the discipline of the school strictly maintained, the Headmaster taking great interest in all the classes. I expect the highest possible results from this school." The pupils answered theory questions, sight read, sang in unison and in parts and learnt the Tonic Solfa System. Set songs were examined by the Inspectors. Among the music teachers were Mr Rennie, Miss Waugh and Mr McKereth. Mr Mattingley, a man of some musical skill, passed the examination for Music Masters and with his sympathetic and capable participation, music was a feature of the school. On one occasion, as the song, "The National Anthem," was "rendered in a manner that made the rafters sing again... and the sound of the clear bell-like voices of the children made a lasting impression on all who heard them."
Of the overall curriculum, Curlewis baulked the absence of practical instruction. Many educators of insight were beginning to resent the tyranny of words.21 There was weariness in reading, arithmetic and spelling. Long lists of geographical place names were repeated over and over again until memorised. In arithmetic the mystery of French and Flemish ells, and "the hoary antiquity of wool weight" were being taught.22 There was much in the curriculum which had remained unchanged since the first schools in the colony were opened. The legislation of 1872 was not concerned with curriculum reform, and with the continuance of the system of payment by results and inherited practices, piecemeal innovations quickly became stifled.

The curriculum innovations of 1888 are therefore interesting as they presaged greater emphasis on the fulfilment of the individual child. The Minister explained that while seeking to oppress the memory less with minute detail than formerly prescribed, the new programme of instruction "aims more at imparting knowledge that will be of direct practical value after the close of a school career: and above all, by the more intellectual teaching which it requires it attempts more effectually to train and exercise the thinking powers."23

The new subjects of history, object lessons and elementary science were placed in the confines of inspection and examination. Old methods died hard in the nineties. Teachers were scarcely assisted in their re-orientation, and the new textbooks scarcely departed from old methods. The Minister recorded that "It is to the credit of teachers that they have loyally grappled with the difficulties of the programme and sought to carry it out."24

The useful knowledge lessons often became tasks to be learnt by rote. Object lessons disclosed a want of practical knowledge and general information. Curlewis criticised one of the first object lessons at Errol Street because no object was exhibited and language was carelessly used.25 He advocated a more practical approach. Mere parrot-like recital of textbook words met with his supreme disapproval.

In the field of infant education Errol Street became one of Melbourne's trend setters. Mrs M. J. Mattingley became one of the first teachers to adopt kindergarten methods. It is fitting that Elizabeth Mattingley's daughter-in-law took over the direction of the infant department, enhancing it by her urge to depart from accepted techniques and by her willingness to experiment. Even before Mary-Jane explored kindergarten techniques her mastery of traditional procedures resulted in well-conducted infant classes. In 1886, Inspector Laing wrote, "The infants are under able management and show proficiency in the subjects in which they are examined. Their rhymes and singing are worthy of special notice."26 Children of three and four years seated in the gallery were taught the alphabet, tables, rhymes and reading for half an hour at a stretch. Although they were not submitted to the rigours of an oral examination by the inspectors, discernible academic progress was expected of them. Of infants in general, Inspector Holland wrote in 1891, "they soon acquire the habit of repeating after their teacher . . . without intelligence and without mental effort . . . while presenting a semblance of work and attention."27

Mary-Jane attended the lectures given by Mrs Goulden at the Model School in 1887-1888 and she was one of the few chosen to attend regular classes of instruction on Saturday mornings. Mrs Goulden had been engaged in England to introduce Froebel's ideas onto the Victorian Education Department.28 Froebel's kindergarten methods were believed capable of developing the moral, the physical and the mental powers of the child. The Minister claimed in 1888 that kindergarten teaching secures "variety in the daily routine of the infant room, brightens the work, and thus causes the child to find an interest in his school life; it stimulates intelligent and individual effort and so renders teaching more effective."29

It is no wonder that Mary-Jane returned to her classroom inspired and liberated. The traditional reliance on verbal stimulation could now be supplanted. Paper, tablets, cubes and sticks were provided by the Education Department and Mary-Jane brightened the walls of her infant room with pictures.

Her willingness to try out the new methods placed her ahead of many of her contemporaries. While Inspector Brodribb and Dr Pearson enthusiastically encouraged teachers such as she, the inspector for the district initially had less respect for kindergarten innovations in the infant classes. In giving his advice for the improving of infant instruction Holland suggested that after manual and marching exercises and short lessons with frequent intervals had been introduced kindergarten exercises could be "resorted to."30 But when Brodribb called in July 1888 to see Mrs Mattingley's kindergarten work and exhibits he was greatly impressed.31

Albert had always held his wife in high esteem and respected her role as Infant Mistress. Errol Street was one of the few schools inspected by Holland where the infants were in the charge of one of the best teachers on the staff. Other teachers came to witness Mrs Mattingley's new methods.

Mrs Mattingley's retirement in 1894 unfortunately coincided with the severe retrenchment measures of the depression. Special kindergarten equipment was no longer issued, the cheque Mrs Goulden had be dispensed with and kindergartens continued to function properly in only a few schools during the nineties.
Mrs Mattingley's enthusiasm and her gracious and winsome manner endeared her to all her pupils. Mrs Duffy recalls her as being exceedingly gentle and kind. She was always beautifully dressed with a bonnet and her twinkling eyes and irrepressible sense of humour were long remembered.

Upon her death on 6 July 1923 her daughter, Mrs J. F. Irvine, endowed a perpetual prize, the Albert and Mary Mattingley Memorial Prize, in memory of her parents. It was awarded annually to the outstanding scholars from the third grade up to the eighth grade.

**BOARD OF ADVICE No. 36, 1873-1910**

Errol Street State School was placed in the School District No 36, along with the Boundary Road State School 2566 and the Queensberry Street School 307. From 1873-1910 these schools were governed by a local Board of Advice whose members were elected by ratepayers for three years. Each of the eight founding members had the exception of one later became chairman or correspondent which resulted in a certain continuity of policy.

Fortnightly meetings were held at first in a flush of enthusiasm but by 1874 the routine had changed to monthly meetings. The quorum for meetings was reduced from four to three in 1884 which may indicate less enthusiastic attendance. Certainly by that stage, if a vacancy on the Board occurred, the Education Department had to be requested to fill it. Meetings were open to the Press, but not directly to the Headmasters who were required to submit written reports and requests. Headmasters were not invited to attend until 1895 and verbal communication only occurred during visits to schools by members of the Board.

Relationships of the Board with the Borough Council were not amicable during the seventies. Preoccupation with the cost of erecting the Town Hall inhibited the councillors in allowing free use of the hall to ratepayers. They considered that the State should contribute towards the cost of their Hall if a State body wished to use it. Only after long and bitter negotiations were the Council Chambers made available to the Board for its meetings.

The Minutes of the Board dating from 1883, the year of issue of their first official equipment, reveal the Board's pattern of activity — repair of school premises and agitation for the improvement of grounds and buildings, attendance returns, truancy and the granting of holidays. In November 1884 the Board closed the Hotham schools “on account of the prevalence of sickness among the children.”

In August 1873 the Board favoured the immediate establishment of a night school. If the school was established before May 1874 it would have had to meet by candlelight at Mattingley’s school. Two days before the opening of 1402, gas was laid on for use of the Night class, for “the young men whose primary instruction has been wholly neglected” and for youths “who in the day are engaged in earning something to contribute towards the family expenditure.”

Inspector Sasse discovered that the lads at the Night Schools in his inspectorate were somewhat unruly. “They injure the furniture, throw stones and other missiles,” he reported. The boys cared little for regular instruction. In 1876, of the 111 names on the roll at Errol Street, only 19 boys customarily attended. The boys were loath to submit “to discipline so necessary to obtain the objects for which night schools are established.” Their slow progress in reading, writing and arithmetic jeopardised the teacher's payments. Few persevered with the extras of grammar and geography. Five girls enrolled in 1877 but only one attended regularly. In 1882, the teacher, Frederick Smith requested that gas be laid on in another room to enable him to teach the girls separately as he believed the work could be carried on more effectively.

The Night School was not a success. Enrolment very slowly increased to a peak of 255 in 1883 after which a decline set in. Study after a day’s work was not popular, especially among those students who had evaded normal instruction by day.

Having responsibility for three schools inclined the Board of Advice to organise joint events. In March
1884, for instance, 800 children from the district went by special train to Geelong where they picnicked in the Botanical Gardens. Races, games, prizes and refreshments formed the entertainment. A similar outing was arranged to Sandhurst two years later. Entertainment of the schoolchildren was one of the Board's main concerns.

The annual Prize Giving in the North Melbourne Town Hall became quite an institution, absorbing much of the Board's enthusiasm and time. In 1883, for instance 1000 admission tickets were sold at 6 pence each. The hall was crowded and a large number could not gain admittance. Prizes to the total value of 25-30 pounds were presented, each containing an honour card. In 1885, the Mayor, Mr J. Langford, donated a 10 pound prize for neat work books. Various guests were invited to preside including Mr Lawrens M.L.A., Professor Pearson, W. H. Roberts M.L.A. and the Chief Secretary, Mr Peacock.

The following description of a Prize Giving appeared in the North Melbourne Advertiser. "The annual concert and distribution of prizes in connection with the Hotham State Schools, took place in the Hotham Town Hall... and as usual the hall was crowded to excess, there being fully 1400 persons present who evinced the liveliest interest in the proceedings. A large gallery had been erected which contained about 300 children, neatly arranged and attired... The children rendered several difficult pieces of singing with marked precision, thus giving evidence of the pains that must have been taken in their training." The programme consisted of songs, duets, choruses, recitations and readings. Songs such as "Don't Fret!" or "The Boatman's Song" were popular.

Funds for the prizes were originally raised by holding special concerts at the time of the full moon. As concerts became unprofitable collecting cards to raise cash for prizes were distributed, along the lines successfully developed by the West Melbourne Board of Advice. In 1894 by this method, the children of 1402 collected seven guineas.

A highlight occurred in 1887 with the generous distribution to Hotham school-children of the Penny New Testament for the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The new Testaments contained a facsimile of the Queen's autograph for the children of Victoria, and the text chosen by the Queen read "Peace on Earth, goodwill towards men." Only a dozen children of the 1100 assembled refused the Testaments. After singing and cheering, a half day holiday was declared to the assembled children who rejoiced loudly.

The innovation in 1872 of the Boards of Advice for the government of State Schools has been described as an "administrative failure." Certainly the Hotham Board of Advice in caring for the whole district lacked rapport with the individual schools. Gratitude and obsequious behaviour were expected from the Head Masters who were limited to formal contact with the Board. In 1886 a petition from the teachers against the Board's refusal to grant a Cup Day holiday was not considered as it was not respectfully worded. In 1888, when Mr Smith submitted his prize list for the Night School after the date specified by the Board, the members eschewed leniency and "deprived" the school of its prizes. There was no sympathy for the struggle of the teacher or for the extra need of the lads for reward.

The members seemed to believe that what the Board provided could not be bettered. They refused Mattingley's request for a Christmas tree for the younger children in the belief that the prizes they were awarded were ample. From the same viewpoint the Board was incensed to discover that Mr Palliser's school children were collecting in the district for a prize fund for their own school. What right had they to act independently, fumed the members, when the Board already awarded prizes?

The most blatant example of the Board's arrogant attitude towards the staff occurred in connection with Mr Madden, Head Teacher of State School 307. Out of despair with the condemned schoolhouse in which he had to continue to teach he spoke directly to the Minister of Education, bypassing the normal channels of communication provided by the Board of Advice. Although a Board member was present at the meeting, the Board was outraged, describing his action as of "a most impertinent character." They called upon the Education Department to prevent the recurrence of similar behaviour. However, as frequently happened, the Department protected its staff member, maintaining that it was Madden's right and duty to communicate directly with the Department.

Such arrogant and exclusive manners did not endear the teachers to the Board. It is tempting to believe that it was for this reason that at a meeting in 1890 at 1402 the Board had to use "two common candles and sit in a cold room" as gas and fire had not been provided. Certainly more amicable and mutually co-operative relationships developed when a School Committee for each school replaced the district Board of Advice in 1911.

Peter Drummond, 1895-1910

In the mid-nineties the school faced a series of crises. Its founder retired in 1894 along with some of the senior staff. Kate Watson had taught at the school for 22 years, Mary Jane Mattingley for over 30 years, Margaret Bowden for 20 years and Bridget Ryan for 16 years.

The loss of such staff had an immediate impact on the school. But a more enduring and far-reaching crisis occurred with the depression. In 1892 the Minister referred to "the grave necessity for retraining." As public servants teachers at Errrol Street faced a percentage reduction in their salaries. Scholarships were reduced and payments discontinued for singing, drawing, drill and gymnastics. Many Assistant teachers were replaced by pupil-teachers. With the exception of ink and pens, parents were required to purchase all their children's school requisites. Inspector Brodribb grieved that, "a system built up with painstaking effort had been tumbled down like a pack of cards."

In 1894 the Minister claimed that although many advantages in education had been curtailed; "the centre of instruction for pupil-teachers has been left untouched, so that the great privilege of getting a good and free education is still as much as ever the heritage of the children of the poorest citizen."
been true. But the citizens of North Melbourne connected with the State School in Queensberry Street suddenly lost the right of attending that school.

In the exigencies of retrenchment schools were amalgamated in the hope of saving thousands of pounds. In 1892, 14 schools were made adjuncts of other schools, and the process continued "dismally" throughout the depression.  

In September 1893 the Head Teacher of State School 307 received notice that his services would be dispensed with at the end of the month. Deputations to the Minister by parents and Board members failed. The opportunity of saving 1000 pounds could not be missed.  

Representing 121 children, 58 parents signed the petition against amalgamation, believing that "our children learn more and are better taught than at any of the neighbouring schools. The teaching staff is excellent, and further there is a very large and dense population around the school. The attendance being over 500, and the cost of working the school is much smaller in comparison with other schools."  

At the last Speech night in 1894 "proceedings were brought to a close with mingled feelings of regret and satisfaction — regret that the individuality of the old school ceased with the old year, satisfaction that it had closed with such an eminently successful finale."  

From 1 January 1894 to 31 May 1907, the school, as an adjunct of Errol Street, accommodated grades one, two and three, while the older children went to the Errol Street or King Street schools. The pupil-teachers at 307 were retained, but the services of the assistants were dispensed with.  

Although the school functioned quite happily under the tutelage of Mattingley and Drummond, his successor, the adjunct era was a regrettable disruption to the school's history which dated back to 1856.  

On 1 June 1907, with a more buoyant economy the Queensberry Street School 307 was re-opened as an independent school of four hundred pupils. Once again, it was free to develop its own policies and personality until it was closed in 1934.  

Faced with all these problems the school was fortunate to acquire Peter Drummond as its second Head Master, a man no less distinguished than his predecessor, and a teacher already of long experience. Errol Street was his final appointment. At his retirement he also was placed at the head of the triennial roll.

Born in Scotland in 1846 Peter Drummond had arrived in Australia as an orphan immigrant following the death of both his parents during the sea voyage. He and his brothers and sisters were brought up by a Brunswick hotelier to whom he owes his education, and possibly his great concern for those who sought further education.  

It was a happy school under Peter Drummond. One of his pupils described him as being "very kind, sympathetic and a real gentleman." A father of eight himself, he appears to have been popular with the children at Errol Street which is not surprising when it is remembered that he greatly reduced canings. The cane was used only on "the incorrigible larrikins."  

He quickly made his mark in the school's Methodical organization, sound and effective instruction and excellent discipline were apparent at his first inspection. While it was initially considered that the overall academic attainment was "not up to the 1893 standard", by 1896 Inspector Holland was able to record that the work had "already reached the old excellent standard."  

The Inspectors were most impressed by the excellent understanding which existed between Mr Drummond and his staff. He had recognized the capabilities and earnestness of his teachers whom he treated fairly and companionably. Every Saturday at the market he purchased a case of fruit which he left in the staffroom for the teachers. One of his staff members recalls the boating picnics on the river and the dances which he arranged for his staff. The happiness of the school was acknowledged in 1902 when the inspector was moved to write, "My visit to the school will remain a pleasing recollection of primary school work."  

Mr Drummond's 15 years as Headmaster were spent in the original school buildings before they had been renovated. Educational opinion at the time was condemning the interior layout of schools such as his for their lack of ventilation and lighting and for the inconvenience of the long schoolrooms in which several classes were conducted, separated only by a green baize curtain. In 1903 the Inspector advised that great care be taken to keep down the noise of the work as far as possible. Recitation and reading were noisy at any time, especially if simultaneously performed by the 60 voices of the two classes in the same room.  

Professor Tattam describes his classroom experience at 1402 at this time: "Lessons were direct from
the teacher who stood in front and dispensed knowledge from the blackboard. In the early classes there was a fair amount of learning spelling and multiplication tables by class recitation and chanting. Free movement was virtually prohibited, and impossible with the type of desks. Dialogue between teacher and pupil was either questions directed to particular pupils or general questions to the class, "Hands up those who..." 18 The Reverend D. D. Munro has similar recollections. "Teaching was for the group, not orientated towards the individual, although if a pupil was in difficulty over a certain point, the teacher would come to his assistance." 19

The long desks at which the children sat, 10 or so in a row, had metal or porcelain inkwells between them. The desks and benches were often of uneven length, ranging from 3 feet to 15 feet, which produced haphazard aisleways. Many of the desks came from the original National School and by the nineties had become rough and ribbed. To recite their tables, the young children stood on the long benches, with their hands on their head. 20 The children also sat at long desks in the galleries which rose, tier upon tier, at the back of some rooms.

The long rooms in midwinter were warmed by the corner wood fires which were too far away from the children to be effective. They were unpleasantly stuffy in summer. Clocks ticked in some rooms while the windows in others boasted colourful window boxes. The poor natural lighting was a constant source of grievance to both children and teachers. As the idea of rewarding children by the display of their work had not gained acceptance, the walls, with their rain dammed plaster, were adorned with maps, charts and framed pictures only.

School equipment was rudimentary by present day standards. The school had one piano, three organs and some music charts and blackboards. There was a set of large drawing models and drawing boards, wall blackboards, easel boards, and ball frames. The globe on a stand, the tellurion, 21 five glass bowls and the barometer in a glass case, were probably donated by the Board of Advice. 22 That is, learning was experienced without the aid of the equipment to which we have become accustomed. Teaching relied almost solely on words, whether written in the few Readers and the penny School Paper, or on the blackboard, or whether spoken or chanted.

Each of the 230 days in the school year commenced at 9.15am with marching and drill in the North yard. The infants performed in the South yard. On Monday mornings the children assembled in their classes in the front yard to salute the flag. 23 They were always "prompt and orderly." The girls, clad in long dresses with collars of crochet or lace and white pinafores stood in lines beside the boys dressed in dark serge pants and coats or galatea suits. White vests and detachable celluloid collars were as popular as the lace collars. The stout lace-up boots worn by the children were necessary to cope with the muddy nature of the grounds and the walk to and from school.

To the music of drums and bagpipes the children marched into school. Once in the classroom they walked behind the benches, placed one hand behind them and one in front, steadied, and then took their seat where they remained for the rest of the day as all lessons were held in the same room, under the direction of the class teacher. 24 At the end of each lesson, singing, drill and physical exercises could be performed in the classroom at the teacher's discretion. There was a midmorning playtime and a luncheon recess from noon to 1.30pm. The children were dismissed at 4.00pm. On their way home, the children called in at Miss Flynn's shop to purchase her home-made stick-jaw pineapple toffee or a ha'p'orth of mixed lollies. 25

Wet days were unpleasant at the school. The grounds became muddy and unmanageable inconvenient the practice of drill and the conduct of assemblies. The children sank ankle deep in mud and water so they had to huddle up on the narrow path in front of the school to salute the flag. Rain poured down on the children in their classrooms and swamped the floor. The classes stayed in over wet lunchtimes, being dismissed earlier at 2.30pm.

 Homework was carefully set each day. Once a week a map was drawn into the copy-books. For a serious offence some teachers caned boys on the buttocks or strapped their hands as an example to the class. The cane was an accepted tool in the maintenance of discipline, being applied to the children or tapped on the blackboard for order. Some teachers were feared by the children. One pupil recalls how she wept when an enraged master walked along behind the bench at which she was sitting, caring each of the 10 children for the offence of one. 26 Mr Drummond preferred to interview the recalcitrant children or detain them after school. The only encouragement was being allowed to go home early, "to the envy of the rest of the class as one walked out to freedom." 27

Outdoor activity was limited to the informal children's games of cricket, football, marbles, skipping, hopscotch, cherrybobs and "saddle my nag." Jam tins or kerosine tins filled with water were used by the more adventurous some boys to toboggan down the steep northern bank which fell abruptly away from the Flemington Road frontage, "Many a devotee learned
his maths sitting on a clay foundation." After school the boys hurried over to one of the numerous cricket-pitches in Royal Park or fished for yabbies in the nearby pools. There was no sporting equipment in the school. A maypole was erected for the practising of Maypole dancing for the exhibition of 1906.

Outdoor activity of a more formal and highly supervised nature was provided by military and class drill which became a programmed and examinable subject after 1876. The enforcement of uniform and accurate imitations of physical movement was believed to exert beneficial influences on the children. Teachers such as Burston, Smith, Faravoni, Mattingley, Drummond and Laurence sat examinations to qualify as instructors of drill and if their pupils performed satisfactorily before the Inspector they were awarded an annual bonus of 12 pounds. Considering the nature of the grounds the drill was performed with precision. Class drill received full marks in 1893 while military drill was usually awarded high percentages in the nineties, reaching 100 percent in 1884 and 1885. Some of the girls resented having to drill from 12-12.30pm on Tuesdays. One father complained that "The Head Teacher calls it class drill. But the children call it punishment. It is a great hardship on the children wanting their dinner."

In 1884 the Board of Advice enthusiastically supported the move by the Department of Defence to establish cadet corps in schools. The cadets wore special uniforms and accoutrements. They practised rifle and infantry field exercises from which they were expected to derive "physical pleasure, smartness, quickened attention and habits of prompt obedience." The cadets, led by Lieutenant Faravoni, always looked clean, smart and steady. In 1887, 75 rifles were stored on the school premises and a cadet band had been formed. During Drummond's time the cadet corps made fine progress, many of its members later fighting in the Boer War.

Despite efforts from the Board of Advice and more particularly from Albert Mattingley, the grounds remained eroded, muddy and bare. By planting gardens between the buildings and the high picket fence Drummond worked enthusiastically to diminish the bleakness of the grounds. "I am pleased to see that a beginning has been made with a school garden. It should prove a source of pleasure and profit to the children" wrote the Inspector in 1902. Within three years the grounds had been greatly improved by the growing trees which were attended to over the hot Christmas break by a specially employed gardener at the cost of one pound. The first garden tools were purchased with the proceeds from the sale of scrap iron.
By 1910, there were 27 garden tools for the enthusiastic gardeners.39

In October 1896 a fire broke out underneath the fourth floor. Thick smoke billowed into the classroom and flames were seen through the ventilators. The Fire Brigade quenched the flames before much damage was done.40

While Drummond’s years at the school started during the depression they later saw the stirring of public feeling and official policy by the Pink Royal Commission into Education. Frank Tate’s inspiring influence led to the effective implementation of the Education Acts of 1901 and 1910 which improved the status of teachers and the quality and range of free education. The practice of payment by results was eventually discarded in 1905, without leading to the dreaded decline in teaching standards. Tate triumphantly announced that “there never was a time when Victorian teachers showed greater enthusiasm for and interest in their work.”41

Such enthusiasm and zeal were apparent at Errol Street as the teachers adopted the new subjects, of manual training, elementary science, nature study, gymnastics and swimming, aimed at nourishing all fundamental instinct, capacities and power.42 The teachers were encouraged to depart from the inhibiting fact and memory orientation and to draw out each child’s individuality. Advice sheets, conferences and amicable inspector reports were evidence, for the first time, of insight into the plight of teachers when faced with curriculum revision.

During his visit in 1903, the Inspector was sympathetic aware of the transitional state of the timetable under adjustment to include the new subjects. He gave advice on the new style of teaching which reveals the new concern for individual tuition. He suggested “more individual practice in reading lessons ... more attention to the phonic method of reading ... each child should be able to observe a specimen in Nature Study ... the sand tray was too small to be of use to all the children”43 and so on. He concluded that “the general result is meritorious and shows conclusively that the staff as a whole have used their best endeavour to compass the new requirements. The general progress is substantial.”44

Among the staff were teachers of long association with the school whose contribution to the stability and quality of school life cannot be overestimated. Mr Robert Faravoni taught at Errol Street for 19 years. He was Lieutenant of the cadet corps. When Errol Street was proclaimed a Training School in 1909 he directed the staff in the training of students from the Teachers’ College of the University. During the last two years of 1910 he was acting Headmaster and in 1916 he became the President of the Union of State School Teachers of Victoria. A fellow teacher describes him as “another real gentleman, the boys adored him.”45 He died in 1935.

Another senior Assistant was Billy Burston. A capable teacher, feared by many for his use of the cane, he taught both a class and the extra subject of bookkeeping. His passion for grammar led him to by-pass the timetable and devote the entire afternoon to the teaching of grammar. Between the retirement of Mattingley and Drummond’s arrival he was acting Head Teacher. He later became Headmaster of another State School.

The school was well-served by several Female Assistants. Miss Stone managed the adjunct school 307. Miss Davison, a motherly teacher, earned commendation for her progressive work in the infant department. Miss Tulloch had a way of imparting the meaning of lessons. She was a very attractive woman, with brown eyes and a colour in her cheeks. With the slower pupils she achieved results where others could not. She would be seen during lunchtimes correcting extra sums for slow pupils. It was to farewell her that the young soldiers came before they marched to the troop ship.46 Mrs Parker, with a B.A. from Cork University, warmed to enthusiastic pupils, teaching them French and encouraging them in their Sixth Class studies.47

Miss Margaret Crowson is recalled by Mother Columba, “We had a splendid teacher; she used to have students coming from the Carlton College giving lessons, while she criticised them. We enjoyed these days, Mondays and Fridays, though at times we were very bad—if a student came whom we did not like we would as a class refuse to raise our hands to answer ... She lived in the Victorian Coffee Palace in Little Collins Street, and came by tram to the corner of Flemington Road each day. There were many children who used to meet her there. In the Christmas holidays she went to Ceylon, but, coming back, just near Fremantle, she took ill and died, being buried at sea.”48 A memorial was unveiled at the school in October 1914, “as a mark of the esteem in which she was held by the parents and pupils.”

Numerous pupil-teachers and some monitors also served the school. Aged between 14 and 18 years, the pupil-teachers were recommended by the Headmaster and examined by the Inspector. They were chosen from the bright senior pupils. For instance, Eliza Edgerton, third name on the 1873 roll, was selected. Among the other pupils who became pupil-teachers were Florence Ponsford, Jane Travis, Alberto Mattingley, and Mary Alice Stone.

The position of pupil-teacher contained four levels. The starting salary of 20 pounds per annum was increased by 10 pounds when successful examination performance promoted a pupil-teacher into the next highest class. It was a hard life — teaching all day and studying before school and in the evenings. Curlewes warned in 1889 that “A girl of 14 cannot well bear the double strain of teaching and study.”49 They studied reading, dictation, writing, grammar, composition, geography, arithmetic and book-keeping. Some subjects were passed at the first attempt, whilst others had to be sat for again which delayed promotion. Most of the pupil-teachers at Errol Street flourished and progressed with the minimum of delay. Louisa Thwaites, for instance, progressed into a higher class each year. Jane Travis, Eliza Edgerton, and Laura Tulloch made excellent progress. Many of those, however, who entered as fourth class probationary pupil-teachers found the dual life of teaching and study a struggle that after making no progress for five years, they abandoned their teaching careers.

In 1895, Inspector Holland was convinced that the training of pupil teachers under Mr Drummond’s care

38
For the third time in succession the school was entrusted to a Headmaster who was to retire at the head of the Triennial Roll of teachers. D’Arcy C. Lear left Bendigo with its peppercorn trees and poppetheads and arrived at Errol Street in January 1911.

He was an earnest and skilful Headmaster who worked in a quiet and insistent way. He was not often in his office. Paper work was kept up to date out of school hours. Most of his time was given to “an active overlook of the scholars at work and to the assistance of the junior teachers and to actual teaching.” Some teachers responded uneasily to his constant checking while others felt restricted by his own definite views and policies. However, he did have a detailed knowledge of his school, his teachers and each scholar and the Inspector wrote in 1920 that “the Head Teacher’s influence and power can be plainly felt in all parts of the school which works smoothly and easily.”

Judged by examination results the school excelled in the academic sphere. Almost every eighth grade child gained his Merit Certificate, and the Percy Walker scholarships were awarded to Errol Street candidates year after year.

THE TRAINING SCHOOL

As Errol Street was a Training School, much time was devoted to the training of Junior teachers, Teachers’ College trainees, diploma students and returned soldiers. Approved methods were thoroughly applied alongside a steady flow of experimentation. A unity of purpose seemed to prevail and the accumulated experiences of teachers were applied throughout the school by means of departmental conferences, criticism lessons and the omnipresence of the Headmaster.

The student teachers were given sympathetic consideration. The process of training young children was exposed in detail and every effort was made to make the difficulties in preparation and delivery understood by the trainees.

The Junior teachers were well trained. Inspectors routinely noted that they managed their classes and taught very well. A Junior teacher recalls her training thus:

“Thursdays were lesson days for the Junior Teachers. A class would be kept behind and we took it in turn to teach them, while the others criticised. The youngsters hated being kept behind and always seemed more troublesome, especially as one did not know their names.”

INITIATIONS

THE RURAL SCHOOL. A Rural School, also known as the “Bush School” or “Practising School”, was established at Errol Street in 1914 as one part of its teacher training programme. In 1899 Tate had recommended the establishment of rural training schools to provide training, urgently required, for country teachers. In July 1914 a Short Course of Training, which catered in particular for rural teachers, was instituted. Late in 1915 James McRae had chosen in preparation one of Errol Street’s classrooms for a
rural school. But peak enrolment foiled his plan. Thus on 30 June 1914, a pavilion type “country” school was erected in the school grounds under the auspices of a Special Committee of the Teacher’s College. Mr Lear was taken quite by surprise. The first he knew of the plan was the contractor asking him where to place the pavilion.9

The pavilion, costing 130 pounds, was described by the Minister thus: “Three of the walls in each building are boarded to the height of 3 feet, and above that height, right to the roofline are fitted with stout navy canvas blinds, which are adjustable, and can be opened to any height in bays. The back wall is boarded from floor to ceiling. The rooms are built on sleeper plates and can, therefore, be easily removed ... without being dismantled.”10

Elsewhere the pavilions have been described as “draughty shacks”, “cheap portables” and “freezing chambers”. By the twenties the rural school pavilion at Errol Street certainly fitted into this category. It was no longer impervious to rain and the canvas on the south side hung in ribbons.12 Lear reported the “urgent need of repairs to the canvas sides ... To make it possible to use the room, we have pasted strips of brown paper inside. Any rain or strong wind causes this paper to break away and of course things are very uncomfortable until these temporary repairs can again be made. Children and visiting students complain and attribute colds and attacks of neuralgia to the condition of the building.”13 Shortly afterwards the pavilion was remodelled in the interests of health and comfort and was removed 100 yards closer to the school.

The pavilion seated 50 children. In 1914, 33 children from the Main School transferred to the Rural School under Mr Pollock. Students and visitors also attended. In 1916, 25 members from non-departmental schools were present on one day.14 James McRae declared in 1914 that “Mr Pollock is doing work in the training of teachers of small schools the value of which it would be difficult to estimate.”15 McRae’s friendly and constructive guidance was appreciated both by Mr Pollock and by his successor, Mrs Bell.

The Bush School was equipped by Mr McRae as a prototype of the numerous rural schools which were bringing education to the remote regions of the State. It contained 16 dual desks of varying heights to accommodate the children of each grade. Visiting teachers sat on a platform at the back in four large dual desks. A set of small maps, one large ball frame and six small ones, wet and dry bulk thermometers, graph and music boards, a bird book, a Phonic book, a large sand tray, a set of small drawing models, a set of scales and weights, liquid measures, test-tubes, a spirit lamp, beakers, wire gauge and a music modulator completed the equipment.16 McRae’s selection reveals the focus on practical teaching which was being advocated by educational leaders. Inspector Henderson reported in 1925 that the pupils were kept active and curious to discover.17

A constant stream of student teachers visited each teacher observing and teaching for a fortnight. Others went to the Rural Training Schools at Queensberry Street North Melbourne, Princes Hill, East Kew or the model rural school in the College grounds.

In 1927 Errol Street almost lost its pavilion owing to the urgent demands for accommodation elsewhere. McRae had previously affirmed that the pavilion room “was urgently needed for rural school training.”18 and in 1927 Lear defended the unique qualities of the pavilion school. “No room in the main building would be so suitable for a rural school as the pavilion and, the individuality and atmosphere of the rural school would be quite lost if conducted in the main building.”19 His eloquence was persuasive and the Rural School is still standing in the school grounds.

THE KINDERGARTEN. A Kindergarten, connectected with the Teachers’ College was established as a facet of the training school. The pupils were divided into small companies each under the personal supervision of a student from the Training College. Activities included games, marching exercises and action songs, and every opportunity was given to allow the children to practise manual work. In stark contrast to the early infant rooms,20 the aids and apparatus of the kin-

BELOW: Typical infant room of the 1900s.
RIGHT: Infant room today, Errol Street.
ergarten contributed to the children's pleasure and profit. A classroom was altered for the needs of the kindergarten and special chairs and tables came from the Manningtree Road school.

Agitation for a separate kindergarten room was never successful. First suggested in 1909 the idea was revived in 1924 by the School Committee, the Mothers' Club and the Hon. G. M. Prendergast. The estimated cost of 2524 pounds was so great that, in shock, the plans were shelved. The Tutorial Grade. Another interesting feature of the Training School was its Tutorial Grade, described by Leach as "an interesting experiment." It provided individual tuition in an ungraded environment for approximately 25 low achievers. The teacher's discovery of the pupils' predilections for manual activities was classed as "a valuable observation." Witnessing the patient approach and the fulfillment of pupil needs Leach wrote: "It is a pleasure to see these children at work, they are developing keen interest and progressing."

The Library. The establishment of a school library was another progressive feature of the period. Although the Library was of humble proportion, Leach recognized that the Headmaster was alive to the value of reading and he praised the development of the reading habit. Books, periodicals and magazines were purchased from School Committee and Mothers' Club funds. The Illustrated London News, The Girls' Realm and Boys' Annual are mentioned.

Books were housed in the classrooms. As yet, the concept of an essential library complex as the hub of activities had not been envisaged. The Library Survey of 1935 disclosed that judged by overseas standards there was not an acceptable children's Library in Australia. A member of staff, Miss Downes, and a Committeeman, attended the meeting which resulted in the establishment of a Children's Library in connection with the Mechanics' Institute. Thereafter two members of staff joined the Library Committee to advise the selection of suitable reading matter, which established a habit still existing.

Such experimentation and initiative in the use of resources were characteristic of the teaching style at Errol Street. The "fine" spirit of work throughout and the "unity of aim and method" always impressed the Inspector. Time was divided judiciously between class teaching and individual supervision. Clear directions were supported by close and sympathetic supervision. The Inspectors noted with excitement the interchange of opinion between pupil and teacher. Diagrams, illustrations, coloured chalk and blackboards were used.

The school is performing valuable work in the development of outlook. The Head Teacher is a fine stimulating and directive force in the different school activities," was the Report for 1924. The Inspector noticed the respect paid to the pupils' welfare and believed that they were being carefully prepared for the duties of a citizen. All round training in character was the aim of the school. "Permanent gain should accrue to the pupils through contact with the unselfish teachers at Errol Street" he concluded. A past pupil, George Tracy, writes in praise of the staff, "My enjoyment of the school which increased with the years must have been due... to the quality of the teachers as there were no other outstanding... facilities which could explain this."

The School Committee. Perhaps the most welcome initiative of the period was the School Committee which replaced the Hotham Board of Advice in 1911. With responsibility for only one school the Committee was enabled to develop a more detailed programme of maintenance, improvement and general involvement in school life.

At once, the parents' enthusiasm and concern, stifled by the pomposity of the old Board were liberated with immediate profit. The first committee meeting was held at the school on 29 July 1911. Mr O. W. Mitchell was elected as founding Chairman, a position he held until his death in 1920. The children lined Flemington Road as his funeral passed by, "everyone feeling that the school had lost a great friend and helper." Mr Oates became the first Treasurer and Mr E. R. Gorell, who served from 1911-1924, became the founding Correspondent. Other Committee members were Messrs W. Woodbridge, W. May, P. Drummond and Mr Lear as Head Teacher.

The founding Committee did things in style, it was confident and ambitious, and above all, hardworking and devoted. Co-operation with Mr Lear, who attended almost every meeting, was mutually respectful and convivial.

Close personal involvement in the welfare of their schools was an exciting feature of most of the new School Committees. It was fortuitous that the outbreak of the war occurred shortly after the inauguration of the Committees as participation in the war effort gave the Committeemen an indispensable role in school life and a contact with the community which earned genuine praise from the Department. Inspector Gates wrote in praise of the founding School
Committees, "they help to impress on the minds of the pupils the importance of the school, and its work, and they succeed in making the school a center (sic.) of living interest in the district. The plan of giving each school its own Committee has certainly been most successful. In contrast with the increasingly formal and mechanical appreciation of the Boards of Advice expressed in the Ministers' Reports, the Errol Street School Committee received an individual letter of commendation from the Director in appreciation of their public spiritedness. He acknowledged that the Committee's Report disclosed "a fine conception of the duties and responsibilities of a School Committee". In 1925, Mr Lear boasted that he could not wish for a better Committee.

The Committeemen were not afraid of hard work. It was they who repaired the roof, the drains, blackboards, desks and kindergarten chairs and they who built an incinerator and shelves, varnished all the new dual desks and painted the shelter pavilion in readiness for its opening ceremony.

From 1921 onwards regular working bees were held on Saturday afternoons and occasionally on weekday evenings. With assistance from Mr Lear and a handful of loyal parents the Committeemen stripped the asphalt of its dangerous loose metal, erected a stone rockery seat, placed stones in position at the foot of the bank, shaped the banks above the rockery stones, lopped all the trees from the south-west corner to the entrance, made a cricket pitch and a rounder net, laid the entrance ramps, filled, graded and levelled the yard, repaired the fence, erected red gum seats and put up a noticeboard.

All these improvements involved heavy work which was achieved by the men with only occasional assistance from a horse-drawn dray, a plough and two scoops, a horse-drawn roller and a motor wagon. More commonly the wheel barrow was used.

While the yard improvements represent a major achievement of the early committees, their work also extended into fund-raising efforts. They financed the purchase of library books, kindergarten equipment, sporting requirements, classroom decoration and aids, and the annual break-up festivities. A Bazaar was held in the North Melbourne Town Hall during the Committee's first year in office. Two thousand tickets were sold, a holiday having been granted for the occasion. Thereafter, the Bazaar became a regular fund-raising effort, with the provision of orchestras, shooting galleries, pony rides, football, bowling at wickets, darts, hoopla, afternoon tea and well-stocked stalls.

During the war there were no funds to spare on ground-improvements. But the Committee's time and labour was freely given to excavate the embankment and to fill the hollow with the soil. "In spite of lack in numbers", wrote the Secretary, "the enthusiasm shown in the work by those present proved that results can be obtained if the right spirit is there ... there is still much work to be done ... but when complete with its thousands of loads of filling should make it a playground equal to anything in the metropolitan area and something that the Committee might justly be proud of".

When the filling out process had been completed the Committee embarked on a project of converting the embankments into rockeries along the boundaries. The Minister of Education was invited to inspect the project, and after a sympathetic assessment from the Public Works Officer who was gratified to meet such a lively committee, the Department contributed 200 pounds. Two labourers were hired to assist the Committee in forming the ornamental rockeries, first the north and then the south. When the Minister re-visited the School in 1924 he promised to assist in the completion of the rockery and to effect improvements in the drainage.

On 12 June 1927 a shelter pavilion was opened. It had cost 355 pounds, being financed on a pound for pound basis by the Committee and the Education Department. The design was based on the plan of the Kew Shelter Shed intended as a model for all shelter sheds. James McRae declared the pavilion open as Mrs M. Mattingley cut the ribbon. Mr Prendergast and Inspector Henderson addressed the crowd, which included Dr Maloney, Albert Mattingley, Mr Faravoni, and Mr Burston. Miss Mabel Mattingley gave a musical item.

Indicative of the community-oriented outlook of the Committee was their willingness to share the grounds once they had been made usable. Cricket clubs, rounder clubs and basketball clubs, the 1st Girl Guides, were granted use of the grounds.

THE SCHOOL AT WAR

The coming of the Great War represented a very keen challenge for the school as for the community. Ever since 1903 an increased awareness of the Empire had been developed at the annual Empire Day celebrations. The war seemed to appeal to the best instincts of the teachers and children, who, pledging themselves to personal service, worked increasingly for the war effort.

The Education Department with its State-wide network of Schools initiated a programme for War Relief in August 1914. State Schools were assigned to districts to facilitate the collection of funds, Errol Street belonging to the Sixth District.

In 1915 the children prepared warm garments and comforts for the troops from materials provided by the Education Department. The sewing class had never known such constant hard work! If the children ever forgot their fathers and brothers in the trenches they were soon reminded by the sound of soldiers marching past the school from their camp in Royal Park, en route to the troop ships. Every conceivable social occasion was diverted into fund raising. The combined sports on Empire Day contributed 24 pounds. Flower Days were observed and numerous picture shows and penny concerts were conducted. One concert raised 10 pounds for the British Red Cross. By such entertainments State Schools over Victoria contributed a total of 20,000 pounds to the British Red Cross. Red Cross charts were pasted on the classroom windows at Errol Street. The children enthusiastically joined the Busy Bee movement in 1916.

Errol Street was one of six schools to hold a preliminary district display in November at the North
Melbourne Cricket Ground which resulted in a profit of 3000 pounds.41

A "Win the War" procession marched through the streets of North Melbourne in 1917. Errol Street was represented by squads of children wearing the colours of the regiment in which their relatives were serving. Others, waving flags, rode in a decorated horse-drawn van lent by local tradesmen.42

In 1918 a Patriotic Quilt was sewn at the School, with fees for the names embroidered on it amounting to 7 pounds. The Caulfield Military Hospital was adopted by all State School children who had donated 10,000 pounds towards its erection. Gifts, valuing 600 pounds each month, were donated by school districts on a rostered basis. The Quilt, Errol Street's contribution, was presented by the children who entertained the soldiers with a concert and cheered them with the presentation of foodstuffs.43

Encouraged by the splendid results of fund raising in its schools, the Education Department established a War Savings Movement in February 1918. The children bought War Savings stamps and worked with their teachers to encourage local residents to subscribe to War Bonds. A Parents' Meeting was called at the school to popularise War Savings. Seventeen pounds resulted from the Self Denial Week. The teachers' war savings amounted to 128 pounds and the children's to 147 pounds. In 1924 the school's Patriotic Fund stood at the grand total of 720 pounds, two shillings.

Peace Day, 4 August, 1919, was celebrated with well earned relief and joy. With their share of the 1000 pounds donated by the Melbourne City Council for the entertainment of City Schools, the Errol Street children and staff picnicked at the Zoological gardens. Free rides on the elephant, the model railway and in the donkey cart were taken with glee. One of the pupils remembers the Peace Medallion, commemorating the landing at Gallipoli, which was given to the children.44

The habit of fund raising lived on, and was immediately diverted into a fountain fund to honour the 41 ex-
pupils who did not return. The memorial drinking fountain was unveiled by Brigadier-General Brand on 17 April 1919 with "a soldierly and sympathetic address." Mr Prendergast delivered a stirring speech and patriotic songs were sung. Reverend Milne dedicated the fountain, and the speech of the Minister of Education appealed to the large crowd assembled.45

Parents and children worked for the purchase of the Honor Board which listed the names of the 314 scholars who had volunteered. The senior girls, for instance, raised 27 pounds, three shillings and sixpence. The Board hung in the hall, was a feature of pride in the school, commended by visitors and inspectors.

The soldiers' homecoming and repatriation was followed by epidemics of meningitis and influenza, at the peak of which the school had to be closed. Day after day, hearses and mourners from Allison's funeral parlours passed the school with a mournful rumble and bells tolled for one death after another.

THE CORPORATE TRADITION

The magnificent response of children, teachers and parents during these war years quickened and deepened the school spirit. A corporate loyalty took hold of the school which continued for many years after. It was an era of cloth badges bearing the motto "Aim High" sewn on pockets and caps. A school song was introduced along with House badges and Prefects' badges, and the motto, "Nothing without Labour".

School life became richer and more diverse year by year. Children were offered occupations such as needlework, raffia weaving, papercrafting, sloyd, modelling in plasticine and gardening. All grades participated in a well organized gardening programme which included the judging of garden plots each March.

Sport assumed increasing importance. Besides physical exercises and drill, outdoor sport was in-

LEFT: Sloyd models and equipment.
RIGHT: Sloyd workroom.
increasingly held as the Committee improved the
grounds and provided equipment. In 1923 a cricket
pitch was made and poles were erected for the
rounders club’s nets in 1925. The children also used a
tennis court and a Maypole. Mr Leach was thrilled
that the grounds were fully used as an “educational
adjunct of the school.” Being debarred from sport
was considered a very unpopular punishment. The
abundance of sport and open air activities is still re-
called by old pupils.

Winter football matches for the boys and basket-
ball competitions for the girls were held against teams
from the neighbouring schools and Errol Street boast-
ed a Football Club during the twenties. To celebrate
its victory in 1917, the football team was presented
with “special medals” and their photograph was dis-
played in the school. N. D. Simpson, an Errol Street
footballer, was chosen to represent the whole district
in an interstate football team at this period.

An Annual Sportsday was held for inter-district
competition. Errol Street winning the pennant many
times, and annual Empire Day celebrations concluded
in the afternoon with a festive sports day at the North
Melbourne Football ground.

During the summer months the children had
swimming lessons at the City Baths. One incident
reflects their worth — Claude Comp rescued his broth-
er in 1913 from drowning in the Yarra River.

Miss Gertrude Anderson came to test those child-
ren who were to participate in the famous physical
culture displays at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A
teacher recalls that “she was very strict, but had the
children up to perfection.” Errol Street had a set for
the Maypole dance and another for the Stick dance.
Special clothes were worn, sewn by parents from
patterns cut out at school.

From the loyal assembly each day school gather-
ings developed into a more vital and sophisticated ser-
ies of meetings which, by catering for the interests of
the children, the parents, old pupils, and local leaders
acted as a highly successful means of contact between
the school and the community.

From 1915 for the next few years, Anzac Day
ceremonies had a profound impact on the children and
visitors assembled in the school yard. The Honor Roll
was read by the Headmaster. With united conviction
the crowd sang, “O God our Help in Ages Past”, sal-
huted the flag and sang “God Save the King”. As the
bugler sounded the Last Post even the thoughts of the
Headmaster were carried away to the death in battle
of his eldest son. Speakers over the years included
returned soldiers, some of them ex-pupils who
recounted their experiences on the battle fields.
Stirring patriotic addresses were delivered by Mr

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Physical culture display by state school pupils at the
Melbourne Cricket Ground.
Maloney M.H.R., an ex-pupil, the Hon. G. M. Pendergast, the Minister for Education, Dr Smyth and the Chairman of the School Committee. 50

A similar programme was drawn up to celebrate Empire Day. A Sports meeting was held in the afternoon with races, medals and prizes, a merry-go-round, a Punch and Judy and a clown. In 1916 such festivity bowed to the war, and no sports were held owing to the many calls on the public. But by the following year, the sports afternoon had become a fund-raising effort. After the war, Empire Days included a band for the flag salute as well as the presence of boy scouts in uniform, and reading of the Message from the King and Queen was also introduced.

From 1904 onwards annual Arbor Days were celebrated, with the aim of exciting the desire to plant trees and to care for them. The children received a special edition of the School Paper to popularise the idea but there was little need for it in a school so alive to the value of gardening. A rose-pruning demonstration was held one year. Other years were marked by the planting of trees — five palms and a peppercorn tree, 200 shrubs and 1,000 ivy cuttings. The boys assisted in the grading of part of the playground. The Hon. G. M. Pendergast planted a "Tree of Heaven" in 1916 and in 1920 memorial trees were planted. Plants were purchased from funds raised at special concerts, or donated by the Committee or by the Melbourne City Council. Arbor days were described at the time as "exciting occasions" 51 and they were attended by parents, councillors, clergymen and members of parliament.

Before the war the Juniors ran a Lunch Club. A teacher recalls that "one would get off at 12 and have the lunch ready by 25 past. Sometimes we'd have boiled eggs (a penny each) or we'd have salmon (10 pence a tin), sardines (2½ pence a tin). It worked out to cost about 2 shillings or 2 shillings and 6 pence a week, as much as the one joined in the less it cost. Pay day was collecting lunch money day." 52

After the war, in 1925, Mr Lear inaugurated the supply of half a pint of milk each day to the pupils, for a weekly fee of 5 pence. He started with nine gallons which had increased to 19 gallons by the end of the following week. The teachers distributed the milk in the shelter pavilion in mugs provided and sterilised by the Mothers' Club. The idea was so successful that the Education Department asked Mr Lear to extend the service to the other schools in the district. 53

During the twenties a Penny Savings Bank was established. In 1926, 431 depositors had to their credit a total of 598 pounds, 2 shillings and 10 pence.

In 1923 a Junior Red Cross League was formed and the children decided to maintain a cot at the Royal Children's Hospital, which action the Inspector thought displayed a most commendable approach to philanthropic effort. 54 The first year 41 pounds were raised and an average of 30 pounds was donated thereafter. In 1925, in recognition of the money donated to the hospital, Miss Downes, one of the teachers, was elected Life Governor of the hospital. 55

As well as fund raising for community service the children also worked to raise funds for the school. Groups of children held penny concerts and the whole school performed in formal concerts. Perhaps the greatest musical event occurred in 1921 with the Music Festival in Melba Hall where 600 children under the direction of Miss Kennedy sang school songs and national choruses to raise funds for a piano and books. 56

Bazaars, working bees and break-ups were envied after 1923 by the formation of a Mothers' Club. The Committee gave the newly formed Club every assistance believing that their aim of taking an interest in everything in the school pertaining to the welfare of the children, "was as good a proposition as had come before the committee for a long while." 57

The Mothers' Club brought warmth and sympathy to school affairs. The first meeting, 49 mothers attended paying a membership subscription of threepence each month. The meetings included addresses on topics such as diet and baby care, musical entertainment, cookery competitions, sewing sessions, kindergarten displays and stalls. Funds were raised by Picture nights, weekly social evenings at the school and Euchre meetings held with Ministerial approval.

Wherever extra help was required in the school routine, the mothers were there to provide it. Refreshments were served to visitors and at working bees. Children were escorted on outings and milk was distributed by the mothers. With their funds they purchased radiators, matting, staffroom equipment, blinds, vases, potplants and equipment intended to improve the comfort and appeal of the school.

In place of the annual prizegivings conducted for all the schools in the district by the Board of Advice, a
more relaxed Christmas break-up was developed by the School Committee and the Mothers' Club. Christmas stockings were given to the younger children, sports were held, Christmas trees and decorations adorned the classrooms. Father Christmas called in and fancy dress competitions were held. The parents joined in the festivities. In 1923 the Mothers' Club and Committee raised sufficient funds to give each child a Christmas toy or stocking.

When Lear retired in 1927 the Errol Street School had already stood on its site for half a century, providing free, compulsory and secular education for the 26,000 children who had enrolled. With an opening net enrolment of 1785 in 1874 the enrolment had fluctuated, reaching a peak in 1883 of 1966 and declining thereafter to 931 in 1924. While the enrolment varied to a marked extent, the school was filled by an average attendance in the range of 700 to 900 pupils. For many years the average attendance represented 40 percent of the total enrolment. It reached half of the total enrolment in 1888, and its steady increase culminated in 1921 when attendance almost tallied with enrolment. The figures for the half century are an interesting indication of the time it took for compulsory education in North Melbourne to become a reality.

The building, erected in 1874, had been remodelled in 1914 to adapt it to current educational requirements. The long classrooms, the backless benches and old galleries, relics of former educational ideals, were replaced by smaller classrooms and dual desks which provided a workable environment for curriculum changes. The practice of Payment by Results had been ousted and the traditional reliance on verbal stimulation had been questioned. Hints of concern for the fulfillment of each child are discernible and the new focus on practical education was taken up in the following years. While the curriculum in the early years of compulsory and free education had been more closely linked with earlier educational practices, in later years the curriculum had been liberated by Tate and his colleagues.

Under the leadership of its first three Head Masters a corporate tradition had been forged, which included long and loyal service from the staff, consistent academic success, a school life shared between the classroom, playground and social service, and support from parents and the community. Already the School Committee and Mothers' Club had made their impact on the quality of school life.

As a Training School its influence was widespread. The school's willingness to experiment and innovate, especially in the realms of kindergarten and remedial teaching, were meritorious features.

The forms of school life built up during the first fifty years were to be thoroughly tested by the wide range of forces to which the school was exposed in the following decades.
Changing Patterns, 1923-1957

During the Depression

Mr Lear had not long retired when his successor, Ernest Blenkiron faced the Great Depression, the first of a series of vicissitudes which, in testing the routines and traditions inherited from the first half century contributed towards the changing patterns which characterised the school during the thirties, forties and fifties.

The Depression of 1929 brought varying degrees of financial hardship for most families in the community. Previously, the depression of the 1890's had struck North Melbourne after a boom period of steady residential expansion when the district supported as many skilled workers as labourers and unskilled workers. Many residents were involved in the retailing activities which made Errol Street a famous shopping centre, or held service posts or white collar positions. In marked contrast to the 1930's very few mothers had to work to support the family.

However the depression of the 1930's struck quite a changed locality. From about 1900 onwards North Melbourne had begun to decline as a residential area and skilled workers and middle class families moved out to the better homes with gardens in the newly developing suburbs. Elderly people, war widows, invalid soldiers and low income families remained and more working class families moved into the boarding houses made from the former family homes. North Melbourne had become a labourers' suburb and light industry and warehouses had taken over much of the area.

North Melbourne's share of unemployed workers was considerable and many children at Errol Street had fathers on relief. Four fathers were "humpers" (swagmen), one had become a rabbit-trapper and another had taken up prospecting. During the depression a significant group emerged amongst the children's parents. In 1929 mothers involved in "domestic duties" represented half the number of labourers, the largest occupation group. By the following year however, a huge increase had occurred so that as many children had mothers involved in domestic duties as had labouring fathers. It was not until 1933 that the labourers outnumbered the working mothers. Some of the women may have been deserted wives or war widows but it is likely that most of the women whose husbands were on the dole eeked out the family income by earning a mere pittance, no more than one pound, which did not invalidate the husband's claim for relief.

Many of the children at the school were undernourished and hard pressed, coming to school barefooted and without lunches. Some children had to forgo further education to earn the wage their unemployed fathers had been denied by the devastating disruption to industry and commerce. The plight of the swagmen who trudged past the school typified the general social dislocation.

In June 1930, following a survey of conditions in Victorian schools, the teachers established a State Schools Relief Committee for the distribution of food and clothing. No case of need was reported without immediate relief being provided. In the winter of 1932, for instance, 60,000 hot dinners were served, 7000 garments were sewn at schools, over 2000 pairs of boots were issued and 400 gallons of milk were distributed daily. Errol Street benefited from this munificence by the daily supply of six gallons of milk. The record of altruism on the part of the teachers, children and parents was described by the Minister as "one of the brightest chapters in the history of the Department."

At the school itself both the School Committee and the Mothers' Club provided funds and assistance towards the relief of distress. Fruit and second hand clothing were distributed, and a steady supply of boots was arranged. One pupil recalls the distribution of boots to the children whose fathers were on relief. The boots were heaped on the classroom platform where the children tried them on until they found a pair that fitted. The Mothers' Club sold sausage rolls and hot dogs and financed brown bread, apricot jam and cocoa for the kindergarten children. For six years from 1929 to 1935 the kindergarten received greatly appreciated assistance from Miss Jeffrey and her form at the Methodist Ladies College in Hawthorn.

As all adjustable government expenditure had to be cut by 20 percent the teachers suffered losses in salary and promotion. The School Committee was advised in 1929 that no further expenditure of their
allowance could be incurred without departmental
approval. Consequently larger projects were post-
poned and minor repairs to the school were performed
by the parents. McRae described 1930-1931 as a year of
drastic retrenchment and the following period as
"the difficult years."10

THE REVISED COURSE, 1934

While the immediate consequences of lack of funds
seemed disheartening and iminal to progress the
long term results, paradoxically, produced construct-
ive curriculum innovations which were retained until
the late fifties. Under McRae’s direction the
Curriculum Revision Committee invited inspectors
and teachers to revalue the methods of teaching and
organization and the subject matter taught in primary
schools. Each inspectorial district held conferences to
evaluate the proposed courses and to analyse the
teachers’ answers to the curriculum questionnaires.

The Hadow Report provided a framework for the
evaluation and planning. Its concern for health,
ygiene, physical fitness and the worthy use of leisure
was absorbed. Its desire for the command of funda-
mental processes such as writing, spelling, arith-
metic, grammar and reading; for effective and well-
informed citizenship; for development of character
and recognition of moral and spiritual values and
effective student membership; for development of
courteous demeanour and good manners are apparent
in the Victorian proposals.11

McRae declared in 1933 that “for the first time in
Victoria we have broken away from the old idea of a
rigid curriculum.”12 The Revised Course of 1934
contained very few fixed prescriptions of what was to
be taught. Rather, its prescriptions were suggestive
and flexible allowing teachers to devise their own
activities to fulfill the child’s needs. Constructive
thinking, not receptive learning was the aim, and the
expected result was the development of each child’s
resources, personality and natural gifts.

Errol Street was one of the schools chosen to try out
the new course in 1933 prior to its general introduction
in 1934. It was well qualified for the challenge. Already
most of the aims of the new curriculum found nascent
expression in the school. The pupils were noted for
their bright and responsive behaviour and for their
ability to act and think for themselves.13 A large stock
of teaching aids was already available, including two
pianos, a wireless set, and a gramophone. The basis of
a reference library had already been started to sup-
plement the long established grade libraries and the
liaison with the North Melbourne library. Started by
Paige in 1930, the reference library was extended
under his successor, Teregas, who encouraged the
acquisition of reference books from School Committee
funds.

It was indeed fortunate for the school and for the
success of the experimental year that it was directed
by such a methodical and indefatigable worker. When
Edmund A. Paige arrived at Errol Street in 1931 the
Inspector realising that “He has high ideals,” predicted
that “No 1402 will prosper under his direction.”14
By testing, teaching, supervising and staff confer-
ences Paige maintained a close contact with the
implementation of the new curriculum. His concern to
achieve the full development of his pupils’ personali-
ties provided sympathetic leadership for the staff. Lola
Russell, who arrived at Errol Street in 1933 recalls that
“the teachers were pleasant and took an interest in
us. We felt we were personalities, that people cared
and that we were progressing in a friendly warm
atmosphere.”15

The experimental year was a thorough success. A
typical inspectorial entry is as follows: the grade “is
a sparkling group. Posters and illustrations abound
and they have been used to expand the pupils mental
horizons to a remarkable extent. Tables are answered
with hair-trigger promptness and unflagging accuracy.
A series of Littleman lectures on social studies sub-
jects was a revelation of what can be done with in-
spired teaching. A large measure of self-government
is evident.”16

At long last, verbal instruction had lost its
supremacy, and an exhilarating focus was placed on
practical work. Individual and group projects prolif-
erated, and debates, dramatisations and Littleman
lectures were used by pupils to express their ideas.
Children kept nature diaries, anthologies of their own
verse, and books of current events which were seen to
involve “real educative work on the part of the child-
en.”17 By 1936 Debating and Dramatic Clubs had
been founded and the senior students conducted a
Parliament of Youth. Handwork was encouraged to
amplify ideas and to form a bridge between subjects.
Models epitomised the enthusiasm for doing and mak-
ing in preference to the memorization of facts. The
children also did basket-weaving, woodpolishing and
fretsaw work.

Twenty-six display boards were purchased for the
illustrative matter such as newspaper clippings,
projects, meteorological and health charts, gathered
by the teachers and the pupils. Classroom shelves
suddenly bulged with instruments, nature study
exhibits and models. A projector was purchased in
1937 as part of the diversifying of resources.

Learning was carried into the community with
excursions to Parliament, the Royal Mint, local in-
dustry and municipal services. Outdoor stimulation
was sought through nature rambles and school gar-
dening which was carried out so enthusiastically that
Errol Street won the Australian Natives Association’s
prize in 1937 for the best kept garden and grounds.18
Sport, which included swimming, continued as a popular
and well-organized part of school life. In 1936 a
Fife Band under G. Cantela was started.19 Fifes cost
six shillings and sixpence each and the weekly tuition
fee was sixpence. Traditional games continued in the
yard, with the additions of World War I soldiers and
rolled paper footballs.

A Junior Safety Council attempted to relate safety
to the pupils’ lives and the Junior Red Cross Circle, led
by Miss M. Downes, continued to support a cot at the
Royal Children’s Hospital. In 1935 600 eggs were gath-
ered for the Royal Melbourne Hospital and donations
were made to the Lord Mayor’s Distress Relief Fund
and the children themselves provided shoes and cloth-
ing for their poorer classmates. The infant depart-
ment supported the Kildonan Presbyterian Home
School which had been affiliated with the school. In
1935, 537 depositors at the school bank had a balance of over 400 pounds.20

Under Mr D. McMaster the Sloyd Centre, conducted in the detached timber building now used for art and craft work, was used by scholars from Errol Street, Kensington, Flemington, Ascot Vale, Rathdowne Street, Boundary Road, King Street, Princes Hill, Coburg, the Gordon Institute, University High School and the college Rural until it was closed in 1948.21

It was a period of King and Empire. In 1933 a splendid Pageant of the Empire depicting how the Empire was won was won was performed. In 1937 the coronation was celebrated, each child receiving a coronation medal. Some children participated in the Melbourne Centenary Display at the Cricket Ground patronised by the Duke of Gloucester.

During 1933 the closure of King Street State School involved Errol Street in the absorption of many new pupils. The King Street buildings were occupied by MacRobertson's Girls' High School until the completion of their present premises.22

The school's Jubilee was celebrated in 1934. An Old Scholars' Association had been inaugurated in 1928 with a committee of 16 chaired by Mr Travers. The

Errol Street Old Scholars' Association

President, Dr. H. V. Manningly

Committee

Montefiore Ladd, Woolridge, J. R. Collins, S. H. Willing, Wills,
Miles Gardiner and Ellis

Dr. A. P. Davidson, Mears, A. Manningly, E. V. Foxwell, J. H. Kippen, J. Gehrard,
B. City, G. Garland, W. Woodbridge, H. Lapp, W. S. Els, W. Nash, E. P. Arnold,
E. L. Brad, A. F. Bradbury and A. Macfarlane

Treasurer, Mr. E. A. Fitch

Secretary, Mr. W. H. Rasmussen

128 Eton Street, West Brunswick

Preparations for the Jubilee

Programme

1. National Anthem
   Princess Hill School Band

2. Musical Item
   Senior Boys

3. Welcome Back to School
   Headmaster

4. Musical Item
   Senior Girls

5. President "Old Scholars"
   Welcome Visitors

6. Musical Item
   Junior Boys

7. Addresses in Reply

8. Item
   Junior Girls

9. Musical Item

10. Afternoon Tea

Errol Street State School, North Melbourne, was packed on Saturday with former pupils who returned to their old classrooms for the school's diamond jubilee celebrations. Above (left): Mrs. and Mr. A. J. Nairn, Mrs. Perchboro and Mr. H. J. Mcllwraith. Left: Seated again in the familiar benches, the old pupils listened to an address by Dr. H. V. Manningly, whose father was the first head teacher.

KE COMMITTEE MOVES FOR PEACE

AGENT-GENERAL ATTACKED

"Jump onto the Peace Train" says M.L.A.

MEMBER'S TILT

A peace train has been launched by the Labor Government to carry peace-minded citizens to the Peace Conference at Fifth Avenue. The train will leave at 3.30 p.m. on July 19th, and is expected to arrive in New York on the 21st of the month.

WOMAN DODGED BY COW SAIL AFTER ADVENTURE

Rushed When Playing Golf in R.A.
names of 80 old scholars appeared on the first membership list. On July 18, 1934, a Social Reunion of old scholars was held at the London Stores cafe. Supper was enlivened by musical items, community singing, and a roll call of old pupils. Guests of honour included one of the oldest pupils of the school, Dr Maloney M.H.R., D'Arcy C. Lear, R. Faravoni and Mr Prendergast M.L.A.

On Saturday 6 October, the Jubilee was celebrated at the school by the pupils and 800 old scholars. The children contributed musical items and a display of drill to music. After the addresses, a massed photograph was taken.

In such manner were the depression years spent at the school. An enriched atmosphere in the classroom was matched by an active school life, with the result that Errol Street emerged from the thirties stronger and refreshed.

The new ideas which emerged under McRae's vital leadership marked a culmination of the earlier reforms of Frank Tate. The spotlight had at long last been turned from subject excellence to the pupils themselves and the prominence given to pupil activity in the thirties marks off the achievements of the Revised Course from earlier curricula innovations.

Concern for the children widened to include their welfare and personal development, their health, speech, posture, and classification and above all the determination that each child should experience the joy of achievement. From their experience with wartime and depression living conditions teachers and educators had become fascinated by the relationship between the child's educational performance and his general well-being.

The fourth R — Reason — was safely enshrined at Errol Street where the power to think and do was fostered. It was an innovation which by its very nature did not rely on expensive equipment, and which by encouraging creativity and enquiry could be attempted during the depression.

It seems, however, that the traditional three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic received less of a freshening impetus than the newer subjects of social studies, history, geography, general science, nature studies, physical education, singing, art and manual work. The dichotomy is revealed in the following inspectorial evaluation, "all good features of the new curriculum and fundamentals receive the full attention their importance merits."

It was not until the sixties and seventies that a curriculum orientation of sufficient potency to include in its framework mathematics and English took hold. And despite the debates, lectures and dramatisations most classroom activity remained desk-centred with stimulation, instruction and correction from a platform-stationed teacher. Freedom of movement both within the classroom and to the resource centres of the library and handwork room and concepts of the open classroom are only gradually gaining acceptance now.

However, the general wish of the reformers of the thirties for enriched forms of stimulation and the respect for the child's thought processes set going an orientation which pertains today. It has been the privi-
qualities of this very early example of an open classroom.3

"It was an unregimented and particularly happy school, which encompassed much of the freer approach to learning which is slowly infiltrating our primary schools today."

"The teaching syllabus was basically child-centred. This was extended to the children discussing with their teacher their ideas for the following week's programme."

"Each child was allowed to work and to develop within his own particular sphere, and to extend and foster any specific talent or interest. There was no formal time-table, nor imposed restrictions. The children were at liberty to take their lessons outdoors, and to work in chosen groups, or individually — and always the work was accomplished in a free atmosphere... in all aspects of all subjects the personal experience was accentuated."

"There was no element of competition... there was a complete absence of any sense of failure. No one was under duress, and work virtually flowed from subject to subject. A positive approach and obvious enjoyment in the work was very evident."

"I found the atmosphere conducive to fostering a co-operative and friendly relationship among the pupils, and between teacher and pupils. We were encouraged to be responsible to ourselves and to each other. Because of the nature of the school programme, disciplinary problems did not really exist. To be 'taken off' library privileges was the worst form of punishment."

"At a time when school libraries were the exception rather than the rule we had a very extensive one... Regular visits by the whole school were made to the local library... a love of reading was certainly fostered during these years."

"Each grade wrote and performed their own plays to the others. These were presented each day by one of the groups, and an appraisal was given by the audience. Debates and current topics were also a regular feature, as well as a daily section from Literature, which was presented either by a student or the teacher. A school magazine was regularly produced. In art work, a variety of media was used, certainly an innovation at that time!"

"Each of us had an area of garden to care for. Every child had a chosen task for which he was responsible. Rules were devised by the children themselves, and the school governed by the council elected by a system of preferential voting. If the teacher was away, there was no emergency teacher substituted. Instead the pupils organised the school and it functioned smoothly. This school was ideally the open classroom situation envisaged today."

"Practical experience in the form of excursions and visits to Art Galleries, symphony concerts... formed a prominent part of the yearly courses. The senior children (in 1946) participated in an Australian Broadcasting Commission radio series on social studies."

"Some testing was given, primarily on an analysis basis. Reports were sent home half yearly. In these the student wrote an appraisal of his work, which in turn was commented upon and endorsed by both his teacher and his parents."

Parental involvement was an integral feature of the school. Their participation and support was practical and proved of mutual benefit. Monthly Parent Committee meetings were held — usually with a guest speaker, and a Parents' Lending Library —
supported by the Council for Adult Education, was established.

Four student teachers attended the school each week and Inspectors observed sessions. After six years the children were surveyed by the Australian Council for Educational Research and it was found that the children were over two years ahead of the norm, and that the longer they were in the school the more intelligent they were.4

Dr Murphy based his successful experimentation on a deep trust in the children and a desire to allow them to select their own areas of challenge. In 1948 the Inspector was convinced that Dr Murphy's aim of the true adjustment of his pupils had been achieved.5 He wrote the following tribute to Dr Murphy upon his retirement from the school in 1948.

"He completes his work in the department with the knowledge that he has given service of distinctive worth through his ability as leader and his sincere appreciation and encouragement of the effort of others, and of the many school activities which have had as their aim the well-being of children."6

Thus, despite the depression, Errol Street in the late thirties seemed poised on the brink of an era of steady fulfilment. But instead the school was faced with many interruptions, starting with the poliomyelitis outbreak in 1937. Due to the frighteningly rapid spread of the disease, all schools were closed from 1 to 15 February 1938, after which date the older children at Errol Street were allowed to return while the younger children did not return until March. All were familiar with the sad sight of the polio victims being wheeled around in their long beds. Children who had been in contact with patients had to remain at home and special assignment booklets were drawn up for their use. During the prolonged absence of the pupils, the teachers attended to desks, equipment and the library and re-decorated the classroom walls. Lost time had to be made up after the children had been settled into the school routine after their prolonged break.

Second World War

Apart from the sight of polio patients being wheeled around in their long beds, the quiet streets of North Melbourne were scarcely perturbed by the outbreak of poliomyelitis which had only brought sorrow and dislocation to certain houses. But with the coming of war in 1939 the whole of North Melbourne's community was affected.

Tanks and heavy army vehicles rumbled past the school on their way to the docks. The beautiful Royal Park, which had stationed soldiers under canvas during the First World War, was once again converted into quarters for the American and Australian armies. Wooden and tin huts were erected in the area called Camp Pell. Errol Street children soon met the American soldiers, with their guns and dollars.

At the outbreak of the Second World War North Melbourne was a working man's suburb, with a high rate of population turnover caused by the appeal of its cheap housing to itinerant workers. But despite its poor appearance the area sustained a rich community life. The "street-life" of the children provided constant companionship and an access to alternative homes when parents were ill or temporarily impover-ished. Meals and bedding were readily available along the street.1

As a rule most families had little spare cash and living conditions in many homes were difficult. Approximately half of the boys at Errol Street were Her- ald boys and those who did morning round were at school tired and unresponsive. Among the boys the urge to commence earning money prevented them from settling down in the supplementary grades and special planning was required to secure their goodwill and co-operation.

As the war years went by living conditions drew closer to penury so that many children lacked proper clothing and nourishment. School requisites had to remain un purchased, and the children certainly could not afford to buy the toothbrushes they were advised to use by the dental posters in their classrooms!

To meet the economic needs of many families the school was adopted in 1939 by the city firm of Brown and Dunlop, through the work of Miss Burgess. Their funds supplied, among other things, hot water, blankets for 44 needy children.2 In 1939 also, the State Relief Committee provided Errol Street, with six and a half gallons of milk daily.3 Concern for the children's welfare was a notable feature of the Headmaster, Treagus, who kept in touch with the institutions working to improve their living conditions.

The rigorous of wartime rationing, manpower restrictions, reduced funds and family disruption became regrettable impediments to the progress the school had been making towards a liberalised education whose aim was the fulfilment of each child. It was an era in education of blackboards made of blackened linoleum, of lead-pencilled reports on thin brown paper, of parents repairing the school buildings and equipment and of tasks requiring funds and equipment being left undone.

The leaking roof caused dirty and water-stained walls whose drab and neglected appearance could not be disguised by the pictures and pupils' work which hung on them. With doorlocks standing unrepaired the school suffered depredations by vandals. With the loss of assistance from fathers who had enlisted coupled with the upsurge of theft and vandalism it was no longer practicable nor possible to maintain the garden plots or shrubberies. Thus, only 10 years after winning the Australian Natives Association prize all the plots had perished with the exception of those kept by the Rural School, and school gardens were not re-established until 1952. The surroundings were not attractive.4

In contrast to the preceding years, very little innovation occurred at Errol Street during the forties. Of course, Murphy's Rural School which was painted and renovated in 1940 was acquiring fame for its experimental work, but other changes in the main school were unconnected single events which can quickly be listed. In 1941, at the parents' initiative and cost, a wireless system was installed at the school. In 1946, parts of the grounds which had fallen into dangerous disrepair were graded, asphalted and gravelled. Parental support for the school remained a heartening factor. By voluntary contribution to the School Improvement Fund the parents purchased pictures, books, clocks, and electrical and sporting equipment.5

Features which had characterised the school for
many years were adjusted during the forties. The Experimental Rural School suffered by Murphy’s retirement in 1949 and the exciting experimentation he had conducted was not resumed until 1952. The Sloyd Centre which had served so many children from various schools was closed at the end of 1948, an experimental handcraft centre being established in its place.

Perhaps the greatest loss to the school occurred at the end of 1946 when grades six, seven and eight, the supplementary grades, were abolished. In a district where educational ambition stopped at the Merit Certificate and acquiescence with school leaving age the school’s efforts to provide higher education were significant. Special courses to interest the children were provided in the senior grades and more importantly, every encouragement was given to help pupils complete the course.6

The girls, who appeared to have a more definite aim than the boys, were particularly responsive. Courses in cookery, needlework, speech training, physical education and mothercraft were added to English, social studies and arithmetic to develop a wider outlook. From these grades many girls fulfilled their ambitions by graduating to business college. The value of such training, to girls in the area could not be over-estimated, believed the inspector.7 It was more difficult to challenge the boys. Secondary education did not appeal to many, 29 children only entered secondary school in 1943.8

It was in many ways a hard era for Daniel S. Treagus, who, at his arrival in 1937 had taken over a school, which had recovered from the depression, whose dominant mood was one of creativity and optimism. Wartime conditions relentlessly extinguished much of this educational joie de vivre. But, with his apparent integrity and concern for the pupils, Treagus held the staff and pupils together. From 1939 until his leave-taking in 1946 he provided stimulating leadership during the school’s adversity and his sympathetic understanding of the many problems earned him the title of “an exceptional Headmaster.”9

Most children had relatives at the war. News reports were keenly discussed each morning and the German advance across Europe was plotted daily on classroom maps. War topics were chosen for English composition.

With the efforts of the allies uppermost in their minds the children worked untiringly for their support. Serviceable articles such as socks, gloves, scarves, pullovers and balACLavas were knitted for the soldiers during sewing lessons from patterns and material supplied to all schools. Waste material, books and magazines were collected, and weekly bazaars were conducted for war and patriotic purposes. Many pupils joined the Young Workers’ Patriotic Guild, earning funds from their own resources and initiative. The school as a whole contributed to the Victorian State Schools’ War Relief Fund a sum of 479 pounds, 3 shillings and 9 pence,10 and purchased War Savings Certificates to the value of 783 pounds, 1 shilling.11

The War Effort, of course, represented a very positive achievement of the school during these years, and one which involved the co-operation of parents, staff and pupils. In 1940, the staff, who were raising funds for charities outside the district not directly associated with war relief, were requested to curtail their activities “owing to the raising of money in such a poor district interfering with the raising of funds for necessities required at the school and for the children who attend the school.”12

Fortnightly socials at the school, raffles, concerts in the Town Hall, picture nights at the Loco theatre and children’s frolics were the fund-raising activities of the Mothers’ Club, whose funds were divided between support for the school and the Relief Fund. The Mothers’ Club held bazaars and an immensely successful King and Queen competition which culminated in a “coronation ceremony” at the North Melbourne Town Hall bringing in a profit of 80 pounds.12 The Australian Red Cross was permitted to hold its Bazaars at the school for the duration of the war.

The Education Department recorded its appreciation of the spirit of service shown at Errol Street.14 With peace, came hopes in 1945 for a return to normal living with its everyday comforts and reunited families. The Peace Medals, given to the children at Errol Street had to serve as tokens of peace until shortages had been overcome and repatriation achieved.

Camp Pell Interlude

One sign of peace was the withdrawal of American soldiers from their Camp Pell huts in Royal Park. While many local people may have rejoiced at the prospect of a less military air to the district, the use to which the army huts were next put brought new disruption and social problems whose impact challenged Errol Street State School for several crucial years testing every aspect of the school’s resiliency and resourcefulness.

In 1946, as a temporary expedient, Camp Pell was converted into an emergency transit camp to deal with the pressing housing shortage. It became a 10-year “temporary solution” until Henry Bolte forced its closure in 1956.1

The long iron and wooden huts of Camp Pell were divided into three sections, housing one family per section, regardless of family size. The huts were poorly furnished and often lacking in bedding and floor coverings. The roofs leaked and the rooms were inadequately heated and draughty in winter. Visitors to the huts were attacked by fleas.

A playground was provided for the younger children but the older children were not provided for. They had what looked like an immense opportunity for recreation with all the vacant ground, but the children did not play. Nobody thought of the war play and the older children generally had the care of their younger siblings. A certain aimlessness marked their past-times.2

Camp Pell housed a wide range of people. Normal families who sought a temporary home there were highly motivated to move on as soon as housing became available. These families valued education and many of their children were above average pupils. The rump population lacked such family cohesion and initiative. As others moved on, Camp Pell increasingly became the home of problem families, the unemployable, alcoholics, the chronically ill and the layabouts.3

After years in emergency housing the life of many
families had deteriorated. Their spirit had gone and yet they longed for the privacy of their own home. Others, of low living standards, were alien minded and lacking in motivation to move out of the camp. A small group of anti-social people had a disruptive impact on the whole area. They were foul-mouthed and defiant. Drunken parties and bashes were common and they banded together for criminal purposes. It was said that no policeman would venture on his own into their section.

It was a decidedly unsavoury environment for the Camp Fell children whose normal growth was hindered by the prevailing outlook and attitudes. When both parents worked, the children suffered impoverishment of family life and parental guidance. In many homes there was a lack of efficiency and steadfastness. The findings of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence Family Service Project indicated that many mothers lacked the ability to impose discipline on their children. They lacked drive and even basic staying power and had no sense of order. Len Tierney, Director of Social Work and Research of the Citizens Welfare Service wrote, that most adults investigated "had poor educational backgrounds, a number are illiterate. In every case there were signs of severe nervous disturbance or of disordered character formation." Many parents were unable or unwilling to encourage their children's educational efforts, too poor to purchase school requisites, resentful of educational authority and lax guardians of their children's health. Lice, impetigo and childhood ailments excluded the children from school for long periods.

A special school was not originally established on the site. Instead, the children attended the State schools at Boundary Road and Errol Street which created sudden increases in enrolment. In 1947, 150 Camp Fell children came across to Errol Street. Two years later a group of 200 Camp Fell children had enrolled which represented 40 percent of the total enrolment. The school's enrolment was just over half local children and just under half Camp Fell children until 1955 when a school was opened for the last two years of the camp's existence.

Thus, 74 years after the school's opening it was faced for the second time with the challenge of a sudden influx of pupils to whom compulsory education was an alien concept. They came as unruly and unkempt strangers with a marked tendency towards vandalism, resentment, violent behaviour and truancy.

It was indeed a phase no less challenging than Albert Mattingley and his experienced, stable staff had met in 1874. And this time the children did not arrive at a newly opened school. They entered buildings that looked drab and neglected after restrictions on expenditure during the depression and war. The walls were waterstained, the dual desks showing their age and the window panes were smashed by vandals.

As more children arrived the rooms became steadily more crowded and spare rooms that had been used for activity work were reconverted into classrooms so that all rooms were continuously occupied. On days of good attendance there were scarcely sufficient desks and so many desks had to be packed into the classrooms that teachers had to walk sideways down the aisles.

The school's organization was burdened by the attendance patterns of the newcomers. Children would drift in for a fortnight or so and then drift on. Approximately 250 children per year attended the school each year. In one family, for instance, the eight-year-old just did not enrol, while his two brothers attended only on their enrolment day. The Infant Mistress recalls that so changing were the attendance patterns that it was not an unusual situation to plan for demonstration to student teachers a week ahead, only to find on the due day the groups had changed entirely. A similar state of flux had marked the school's opening years in the 1870's.

On both occasions, absenteeism and truancy which adversely affected the standard of the school were stubborn and time-consuming faults to remedy. From 1947 onwards, daily absenteeism ranged between 100 and 150 children. Fridays were the worst days as children were detained at home for house-work, baby sitting and shopping at the market. In 1952, of the 83 defaulters for one particular month, 75 percent came from Camp Fell.

The task of the Attendance Officer was difficult from the start but enforcement became virtually impossible after the losing of a test case. A father unable to pay the fine for his children's poor attendance was imprisoned, whereupon a great furor broke out among his sympathisers. Waterside workers offered to strike, his fine was quickly paid and the family received a sympathy fund from supporters. In retaliation, of course, the parents withdrew their children from the school, thereby setting a precedent for the whole camp. As a consequence, about 80 children from Camp Fell refused to attend knowing that until the Attendance Officer won the test case their prospects as truants were safe. In spite of unremitting efforts on the part of the teachers and Attendance officers, irregular attendance persisted.

As with the school's opening years, increased retardation was the other main result of the new enrolment. That is, children at each level tended to be older than was considered normal. By this criterion, retardation reached 32 percent in 1948. The Inspector declared in 1947 that "the standard of instruction is not for various and good reasons, equal to that usual in this school." He recognised the school's problems, however and acknowledged that the causes of retardation were external.

When Mr L. Strawhorn arrived at Errol Street in 1947 he was immediately confronted by the early stages of these problems. Numerous teachers had left, several of the more capable teachers being transferred. Eight teachers were not permanent and the high staff turnover continued for several years.

Faced with inexperienced and new teachers and the newcomers Strawhorn's leadership had to become more determined. His influence as a Headmaster was exerted by the varying of courses to suit the pupils' needs, by giving directions on state, by staff conferences and careful pupil classification.

Strawhorn's maintenance of continuity was indeed a triumph. He was assisted by a specialist team led by
John McLeod from the Psychology and Guidance Branch who tested the children in the third and sixth grade, suggesting remedial activities. Errol Street was one of the earliest schools to receive their assistance and the group therapy methods which evolved at the school were later applied to many other schools as the services of the Branch were extended. 17

Another specialist with a kind and sympathetic manner experimented with remedial classes which the Inspector believed were proving their worth. Interest was secured in improving the poor speech habits of the children. In 1950 a room was devoted to special activities such as rhythmic work and visual education. A special opportunity grade, in addition to the traditional one, met with partial success in meeting the needs of the floating population. 19

The school had more teaching aids to captivate the newcomers than were available to teachers in the 1870's who were expected to work up their children of such diverse attainments to the common level of the passrate at the annual examination, without the assistance of specialists or equipment. Failure to do so led to a reduction in their salary due to the system of Payment by Results. In the 1940's resources for wider stimulation included physical education and music classes conducted by visiting experts, fortnightly sound track films from the visual education officers to supplement classwork and school broadcasts. Children visited the centres for remedial work, and for dental and medical care. And yet, in the late forties, in their struggle to achieve normal progress, the new resources were listed among the school's problems for the interruption to classroom time they necessitated. In their plight and groping for means of mastering their problems the staff were not ready to exploit these educational innovations.

By 1950, however, definite plans for further improvements had taken shape and several children had made remarkable progress. Few children failed to respond to the sympathetic instruction they received, especially the attention given to slow achievers.

Strawhorn evinced a warm interest, not only in the children but in their parents. He invited the mothers, who remained at the fence to watch their children, to sit in the shelter shed where he gave tea or coffee to the 40 or so who assembled there. He talked to them about the school and their children. The mothers appreciated the social contact with other mothers and valued the interest shown in them.

Considering that half of the school's enrolment belonged to the Infant Department, Strawhorn was indeed favoured to have Grace Neyland as his Infant Mistress. Faced with the problems of late entry, poor attendance, restless pupil turnover and insufficient space for the large grades, she was able to manage through her broad vision, wise guidance, inexhaustible supply of aids and her social concern for her pupils.

Miss Neyland chose the method of group teaching and although she concentrated on the weaker groups, she had a thorough knowledge of the needs of all the pupils. Creative expression was developed through free expression, art and music. The children were encouraged to talk freely as a prelude to writing. All phases of reading difficulties were catered for, which brought student teachers across from the college. Miss Neyland's team were among the pioneers of the use of a sequential reading scheme. She explains, "There was no special scheme at this time, but we graded our books from easy to hard and kept these books, at least 12 of each, in well labelled boxes, and the children who did remain for any length of time, and we did have many who did, found reading a happy experience." 21

Of the staff which worked with a good team spirit Miss Neyland writes, "I had perhaps one of the best staffs I have ever had." 22 Their main aim was to give the children a sense of security. As well as being teachers the team had to be social service workers, especially to the Camp children who represented half of the department. After a period of concentrated social work a quiet tone emerged and absenteeism greatly decreased.

But despite the earnest efforts of the Headmaster, his staff and specialist assistants, the school could not surmount its pressing problems. This was probably due to Strawhorn's traditional approach. The staff constantly strove to improve standards with the aim of proceeding along NORMAL lines. After all, that was the expected aim at the time, and the Inspector's comments were approving, "one cannot but commend the Head Teacher and his staff for their sustained efforts to obtain normal progress." 21

But Errol Street in the late forties and the fifties was not a normal school. With the possible exception of Watsonia State school its problems of truancy, behaviour and retardation had no counterpart in Victorian schools. It was official folly to expect Errol Street to flourish in the normal mould.

By 1951 the school had acquired a most unenviable reputation. Students from the Teachers' College wept when sent there for teaching rounds and teachers left as soon as they could. September 1951 saw an almost complete change of staff. The 16 new teachers who arrived were exposed to the children's violent behaviour in the yard and the classrooms and to their belligerent and unco-operative attitude to authority. 22

Given the loyal and experienced services of the staff and the parental support from the more stable local homes, the greatest single factor in the school's remarkable emergence from strife was the arrival of Matthew Hogan as Head Master in 1952. At once his astute approach led to his independent diagnosis that the behavioural and educational problems had to be tackled as distinct problems of a particular school. He explained, "It was no good treating Errol Street as an ordinary school. It just could not be done. You could have a school lolling along believing you could not expect much better, or you could take the bull by the horns and do something about it." 23

Hogan chose the latter, realizing that to win the children's respect and co-operation he had to create a type of education which would lead them up to the thrill of progress and achievement. For success he recognized the need for staffing re-organization. Herein lay his dual inspiration.

Ability tests administered by the Psychology and Guidance Branch in 1952 had revealed that the general
reading level was two years below normal and for mathematics the children were two and a half to three years behind. He therefore departed from the conventional curriculum under which the children had obviously failed to thrive and concentrated on the basic skills of spelling and tables.

He set simple tests which were administered by Hall. They involved such basic tasks as, “subtract nine from 463” or “For the next 60 seconds start with five and add on sevens as quickly and as correctly as possible.” The children learnt to strive and with the tests of graduated difficulty they actually progressed. They could be seen, chanting tables or additions with each footstep taken on their way to and from school. Reading was later included in the tests and the competitions. The results from the Psychology Tests repeated at the end of 12 months showed such a remarkable improvement that the supervisor in disbelief, administered his own tests as a check. His results were even better. Such a bold innovation was the hallmark of an educator of independent conviction. Hogan allowed the inspectors to report but their reports did not pressure him back to conforming practices.

His second task was to organise the staff as a team to cope with the intensive remedial programme. In an era of staffing shortages and against the current allotment of one teacher — one class, Hogan relieved his senior Assistant, Stan Hall, from classroom responsibility, naming him instead as senior co-ordinator and remedial teacher in the upper school. The experiment had been unsuccessfully attempted at one other school, but when the department wished to withdraw Hall, who seemed to be in excess, Hogan stood firm. He acknowledged that the allotment of staff to schools was the Department’s business but he insisted on his privilege of organising his allotted staff.

He invited the staffing officers to observe the senior co-ordinator at work. Hall was a man of unbounded energy and enthusiasm who did not spare himself. He was popular with the children and their teachers all of whom admired his integrity in high respect. His main task was to conduct remedial sessions for small groups of children during the time allotted to classroom teaching of reading, spelling and arithmetic. The children then returned for the rest of their normal grade activity.

In the compiling of the very detailed half-yearly reports Hall acted as a co-ordinator with the classroom teachers. He maintained constant vigilance over the classification of pupils and suggested remedial measures when required. His presence inspired unbounded attention to the needs of the under-achievers in each grade.

The remedial groups were a courageous innovation which bypassed the “stigma” of the opportunity grade and upheld the child’s self-esteem as he remained with his classmates. With their interest skillfully aroused by Hall, the children eagerly awaited their next session with him, and with developing ability came added confidence and regular attendance. After their initial success, progress was rapid and many of Hall’s pupils caught up with their grade level and returned to full-time classroom. Genuine interest in them as pupils wrought amazing responses. The Department was impressed and Hogan retained his co-ordinating Master.

Hogan was a brilliant team leader who, through a shrewd summing up of human capabilities brought out the right aspects of his staff so that each member contributed his skills to the team which he described as “a wonderfully co-operative staff.” The staff list included MePhan McEwin, Doug Watson, Wally Sutherland, Grace Neyland, John Joyce, Norman Pendergast, Don Marks, Gordon Mottershead and Ivan Dwyer.

Hogan met with the staff and discussed proposals and problems, so that decisions were acted upon by a united staff. The teachers did not face problems alone. Besides Hogan’s leadership and Hall’s indefatigable co-ordinating, the staff were assisted by McLeod’s team who would talk to anyone interested in the children.

It was the enthusiasm of the staff rather than expensive remedial equipment, which ensured the success of Hogan’s plans. In fact, although he shared all that he had, money was not available for anything more than basic equipment. Anything extra such as coloured chalks and paper was purchased or scrounged by the teachers. They wrote out their own assignments, found copies of textbooks for children who could not afford to buy them, and when funds were not available the teachers themselves laid down the first concrete cricket pitch in a metropolitan school to replace the old one which had fallen into disuse.

MePhan McEwin describes the main aspects of the team programme “combining high scholastic standards with strict no-nonsense discipline of a scrupulously just character and above all a zest for sport that took them out into the schoolyard to play with the children. They rapidly won the respect of pupils and parents.” The results within 12 months were indeed remarkable. Three parents attended Hogan’s first Open Day. Two years later 160 parents came along. In retrospect Hogan is convinced that “the most thrilling achievement was undoubtedly the victory with the children.”

The lack of playing and sporting equipment led to aggressive play activities. The area near Flemington Road, called “the Hills”, being the scene for many fights. Hogan encouraged the purchase of essential sporting equipment out of School Committee funds and a cricket pitch was laid by the staff. Sports afternoons were enthusiastically supported by pupils and staff alike. Wally Sutherland who trained the sports team seldom left the school before five o’clock in the evening. The fact that many Camp Pell children competed as team members was evidence of equal treatment to the local and camp sections.

Gradually the children learnt to play without requiring constant teacher supervision and games replaced fights in the yard. Witnessing the changed atmosphere in the yard the Inspector exclaimed, “This would be good in any school — in Errol Street it is miraculous. Four years ago Errol Street was the despair of my district. It is now a source of pride.”

The spirit of amity which developed between the pupils and teachers and the parents and the school
was the basis of the school’s survival and the result of Hogan’s programme. At first, the staff encountered hostility to disciplinary actions, especially from the newly enrolled children who responded to correction in a scowling and surly manner. Obedience was given grudgingly, with questions such as “What right do you have to speak to me?”

Placated by the composure of the teachers who aimed never to raise their voices and drawn in by the integrity and concern of the staff both in the classroom and on the sportsfield, resentment mellowed into acceptance. The following anecdote recounted by one who taught there typifies the process.

Errol Street was warned of the transfer of Bill, whose history was horrific, one of the incorrigible pupils of a Port Melbourne school. As a result of being reprimanded by Hall for pushing as he marched into class Bill refused to enter the classroom, growling, “that big fella isn’t going to push me round.” His teacher calmly eyed the rebellious 10-year-old and equally calmly said “Then you’d better go and tell him so. He’ll be in the office.” The nonplussed youngster stood for a moment then disappeared up the corridor.

“Gone for good,” thought Watson. But no! A few moments later he confronted Stan in the office repeating that “He wasn’t going to be pushed around.”

“Right,” said Hall promptly, “I’ll see that no-one pushes you around so long as you behave yourself!” Four foot boy and six foot man looked each other in the eye. “Are you dinkum?” the boy asked. “It’s how everybody gets treated at Errol Street,” said Hall. Bill considered this a moment then declared, “I’ll give it a go then.”

Hall held out a hand, “Let’s shake on it.” The handshake represented a complete capitulation on the part of the boy who had sensed Hall’s integrity. He became as close to a model pupil as a lively 10-year-old can.”

A partial relief from the large enrolment came in 1954 when a converted army hut comprising four classrooms became the Camp Pell State School No 4719. Two hundred camp children in grades I, II and III enrolled and their attendance did improve. It seems that the children appreciated having their own school and it suffered little vandalism.

In 1952 the Attendance Officer had reported that 80 percent of the Camp Pell children who attended Boundary Road 2566, Errol Street or St Michael’s school in Brougham Street, were defaulters. Parents claimed they were reluctant to allow their children to cross the busy Flemington Road. The school had only two Headmasters during its brief existence, James Healy and Norman Prendergast who had previously taught at Errol Street. With the closure of Camp Pell, the school was closed on 26 June 1956.

During the difficult Camp Pell interlude Errol Street was a school teeming with a lot of enthusiasm. Student teachers once again asked to be sent there.

As the school was almost a century old, it was directed by Raines, Probert and Robertson until it reached its hundredth year of continuous education in 1957. At the end of its first century the school had a doubly commendable history. It had always been a lively school that catered for the changing needs of its pupils while still cherishing the inherited traditions many of which dated back to the first teachers and pupils.
Recent Impressions

Although the first century of the school's continuous existence was reached in 1957, the present buildings and site were only one hundred years old on 1 May 1974. Improved by the remodelling in 1915, the original buildings have served the thousands of children who have enrolled at the school. Recently, in the interests of composite teaching, classroom platforms and fireplaces were removed.

Hailed for their spacious proportions in 1874 the buildings remain a great asset. Inspector Mason writes in 1974 that "the availability of adequate space both in terms of recreation areas and buildings, permits greater flexibility in approach than is possible in many inner-suburban schools."

With the eventual solving of the drainage problems, the site has become quite an asset, and the beautification of the grounds is providing a new dimension to the appeal of the site. In his report on "Recent Changes in Buildings and Grounds" the Secretary of the School Committee writes, "the tree planting program has been extended on most school boundaries to protect us from traffic noise and to create a peaceful atmosphere. Most of the planting was done by parents and apart from a few fatalities in long vacations, the trees are now all quite healthy."

As an innovation to Victorian State Education, the School Committee erected an adventure playground for the infant school. Tree stumps and the cubby house went up in 1970 and the climbing tree in 1973. It was a great success and has since been used as a model for many other schools.

His report continues, "By far the most major recent work has been the complete re-building of the underground drainage system by the Public Works Department. We have had several floods in the yards and following an announcement in 1971 a contractor started work late in 1973 to lay new drains and resurface the yard including the laying of new floors in the shelters and sheds. The landscaping included removing the old ramps to the doors and building new platforms there."

With the drainage, surfacing and erosion under control, the peculiarities of the site, which formed one saga of the first century, may at last be forgotten. Now, assemblies, ball games, sporting activities and circulation of pupils can be comfortably performed in fine weather, but covered corridors are still required for wet weather.

When North Melbourne became a fringe area for city-parkers, the provision of a teachers' car-park became essential. The car-park has recently been properly delineated from the playground.

Understandable frustration was felt by the school committee at the refusal of the Public Works Department to consider their ground-improvement plan which they had drawn up with great consideration. Indicative of the lack of communication is the green concrete, laid where grass was envisaged.

Perhaps the most regrettable weakness to survive into the school's second century is the toilet system. Since their installation with the coming of sewerage at the turn of the century, the toilet facilities have been inadequate and inefficient, placing an unpleasant ele-
ment in every child's school life. When questioned, almost every past pupil describes the toilets as "GRIM."

A continual battle has been waged by the parents for the improvement of the toilet facilities. The first progress was achieved in 1967 when the boys' toilet block was renovated following the tabling in State Parliament of photographs depicting their wretched condition. It was not until 1974 that attention was paid to the girls' toilets, and despite repeated and urgent requests, no decision has been made regarding the application for the installation of suitable toilets within the infant school.

The enrolment in 1974 ranges between 280 and 300 children. One hundred years earlier, 1785 children had enrolled. The average attendance of over 700 is double the present enrolment!

Currently of the 12 classes from the preparatory grade to grade six, three are rural schools and one is a country infant room. The school has an opportunity-remedial centre, and the services of a librarian and specialist teachers for art and craft, physical education and migrant English.

The children are also fortunate in that they are often able to benefit from the excellent facilities offered by the many local community and educational institutions, the Dental Hospital, the State College of Victoria and the Education Faculty of the Melbourne University.

As in the past, lecturers and visiting specialists are welcome to use the school for approved experimental purposes. In this respect, the present staff align themselves with the school's previous staff, including Mary J. Mattingley, Dr L. Murphy and many others who changed the school's style with their original methods. Currently a group from the State College of
Vic. at Melbourne is conducting a science education programme and plans are under way for the commencement of a drama and film-making group at the school.

Perhaps the most exciting transformation since 1857 has occurred within the classroom where the varieties of teaching methods and aspirations, already outlined, have culminated in an educational policy with unique and promising features.

Until the early years of this century skill-development was the main goal of educational theory and practice in Victoria. Epitomised by the underlying precepts of the system of “payment by results” traditional theory assumed that the child proceeded step-by-step in the basic skills of language, reading and mathematics as regularly as his annual physical growth.

In the last seventy years however, the creative theories of Dewey, Montessori, Piaget and others have loosened the bonds of homage to subject excellence. Present educators are themselves the product of the new education forged by Tate and McRae, and recently trained teachers have been benefited from the work of Professor Freeman Butts whose study “Assumptions Underlying Australian Education” questioned many of the premises on which the past approaches had been based.

Transformation has been gradual, but signs of change can be traced back over this century. In 1927, for instance, it was reported that “the problem confronting educationists is that of providing for the best possible development of the individual child. The child has of recent years come more and more into his own. The environment has been made more suitable for his self development. There is now more of encouragement, less of repression, with greater respect paid to his mental make-up and his inherited qualities.”

Since then, the desire to understand more fully the nature of child growth, shared by the teachers at Errol Street, has become a major educational preoccupation.

In their manifesto, “Concept '74” the Errol Street staff explain that their aim is not radical experimentation but a more patient, empathetic and thorough exploration of the actual processes involved in teaching and learning. They do not seek new ends but rather they strive to “use a new understanding of how the child learns in order to develop meaningful experiences which will not fragment his total experience.”

It is not surprising that the underlying premise of their manifesto is respect for the dignity of the individual. It is this respect for the child’s total experience coupled with concern for his total development as a communicating member of society that marks off their aims from the aspiration of the new course of the thirties which set the scene for the fulfillment of each child.

During the thirties it was new to challenge children to seek their own information rather than absorb facts passively from blackboards, recitation and the teacher’s authority. The popularity of debates, projects, discussion and littleman lectures reveal the recognition of the many ways of stimulation and assimilation.

At present, the child is expected to reach fulfill-ment and increasingly during the process to become a more responsive, responsible and sensitive member of society. Teachers continually require their pupils to present ideas, to make explanations, to participate in discussions and to appreciate others’ ideas. No longer are they merely issuing information; they are striving to make social contact and to accept the responses they receive for their efforts.

A school therefore must provide children with as many opportunities as possible to explore their work thereby developing their powers of language discrimination, estimation and comparison. “The development of their sensitivity towards their own efforts and the efforts of others must be guided with sincerity and empathy to help children sort out their problems as they arise and to know their own personal feelings about them.”

Gone is the preoccupation with subject excellence. However, in common with the district inspector, the teachers believe that skill development will remain a vital part of primary education, although they believe the skills may be refined as the understanding of the nature of child development is extended.

It is believed at Errol Street that a sure grasp of the basic skills is the only way for the child to fully utilise the educational and community facilities. The teachers’ aim is “to educate the child at an appropriate level in the basic skills so that he may reach his maximum efficiency and so become a successful and integrated member of society for without these skills he cannot function independently in a child-centred approach.”

The teachers aim to arouse, develop and extend the child’s talents and to develop both self-independence and self-discipline. It is hoped that the children will transfer their acquired habits and knowledge into everyday living, making profitable use of their leisure time and responding to their heritage. A general enhancement of life is sought as the child “will learn to live harmoniously within his environment.”

In the belief that children learn in relation to their needs, emphasis now dwells on the actual activity rather than the right answer. In place of mechanical exercises, the child is now exposed to a wide range of learning experiences, both within the classrooms and resource centres and in the community through camps and regular excursions.

One great advance in the aim to establish a school environment conducive to the development of the child’s potential, is the recent liberation from tightly prescribed curricula and timetables. Modern curricula suggest broad outlines of possible lines of enquiry aimed at learning through discovery and discussion.

The school Principal has much autonomy in setting up structures and procedures and at Errol Street, each teacher is encouraged to initiate his own approach in catering for the particular needs of his pupils.

Separate subjects are no longer timetabled at Errol Street. The first Inspectors would be horrified at the ousting from its tyrannical seat of the strictly adhered to timetable! Rather, the child’s interest determines the activity he pursues, and enquiry can, be in groups or individually. “Nothing is sacred here,” says Concept '74. “If a child is studying houses and is
led on to weights and measurements and then onto ancient history, this is accepted. This is what education is about; learning through the process of doing and following interests. The process is what matters, not the subjects. Man has no cage. Building subject cages limits man’s possibilities — this is NOT what reality is like.”

The new dimensions outlined in the teachers’ manifesto will need to be assessed for their immediate and abiding wisdom by the historian of the school’s second century. But, present inspectorial opinion is full of praise and encouragement. Mason believes that “in common with other primary schools, 1402 North Melbourne is aware of some of the factors influencing it to change. It is fortunate in having a young, enthusiastic staff concerned with its shortcomings and with the needs of the pupils. It is fortunate too in the educational leadership it receives from its principal and vice-principal.”

With 17 years of its second century already spent the school is entering what may be a completely new phase of autonomy which will allow the full flowering of its intrinsic and unique features. With his increasing power the school Principal will become even more decisive and the movements towards community involvement in the non-professional aspects of the school will open the school to the distinctive features of North Melbourne. Rather than evaluating the minutiae of the school against the general model conjured up by the central authorities, the inspectors’ Reviews are now concerned with an overview of the total school programme.

Already an outstanding lead is given by the parent members of the School Committee and the Mothers’ Club who attend to physical requirements, support the staff and foster total concern for the child through their indefatigable work and concerned approach.

The phase of the school’s second century already spent can be likened to the era of the invasions of the British Isles. Both were exposed to waves of newcomers whose challenges and culture contributed to a sophistication of outlook, the import of which will continue to reveal itself at Errol Street in the decades to come.

Immediately after the closure of Camp Pell the post-war migration scheme brought New Australians into North Melbourne. Although many scholars between 1873-1957 were born of immigrant parents, very few children were described as migrants.

Only 14 children between 1873-1883 had previously attended foreign schools, eight in New Zealand and one each in Scotland, Ireland, America and Majorca. Samples taken at twenty year intervals indicate that in 1893 only two English children had enrolled. In 1913, two children were Scottish, four were New Zealanders and a dozen were English. No immigrants enrolled in 1933 and even by 1951 migration was represented by only one Italian and one Maltese child.

By 1952 however, North Melbourne had become a pressure-point in the post-war migration scheme. The first contact was with the parents who attended the English classes conducted at the school while their children tended, at first, to enrol at the Catholic Schools.

Dr Viv. Peterson recalls his first encounter with a New Australian as a pupil at Errol Street, “I will always remember the first migrant child who attend-
ed the school. He was treated like a king. His different appearance, his clothes, his food and his complete lack of understandable English made him a real celebrity."

In the absence of effective modes of communication the classrooms were sorely challenged by the migrant influx. Without any special training or equipment teachers were expected to assimilate the migrants into the normal class routine where their interest and co-operation had to be sustained. It is not surprising that once again the overall retardation at the school of 38 per cent exceeded the peak of the Campbell era.

It was not until 1969 that the school received the assistance of a part-time specialist migrant teacher. Specialised instruction can thus be provided to withdrawal groups with the aim of accelerating and easing their assimilation. The migrant children feeling more secure and receptive in the small group overcome difficulties of vocabulary and social adjustment.

Several rooms at Errol Street were used by the then Secondary Teachers' College prior to the completion of their present quarters on the university campus. Later on the Correspondence School of the

### HEADMASTERS AT THE SCHOOL (1857-1974)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Mrs Elizabeth Mattingley (Inf. Mist.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858-1894</td>
<td>Albert Mattingley, *W. Burston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1910</td>
<td>Peter Drummond, *R. Faravoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1927</td>
<td>D'arcy C. Lear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-1930</td>
<td>Ernest W. Blenkinson, *F. Hurrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-1936</td>
<td>Edmund A. Paige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-1946</td>
<td>Daniel Treagus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947-1951</td>
<td>Louis Strawhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-1954</td>
<td>Mathew Hogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-1956</td>
<td>James Raines</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>George Probert</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957-1958</td>
<td>Victor Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-1962</td>
<td>Aben McMichael</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963-1967</td>
<td>James Duggan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Walter F. Scannell</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969-1971</td>
<td>H. Jack Hart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Geoffrey Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Brian J. Murphy, *D. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Acting Head Teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOL STAFF, 1974

Back row: M. Bos, D. Knaggs, I. Thornton-Tubbs, M. Valastro, D. Williams, G. Kneebone, B. Murphy, N. Lewis.
Education Department was conducted from the school and then the Infant Training Course was based there too. Teachers would drop in to collect assignments and materials and their enthusiasm and new ideas were readily transmitted. Currently two rooms are being used by the homecraft training centre.

Two major encounters with educational institutions occurred in the sixties, the first had an immediate but not enduring impact. From 1963 until September 1966 the Flemington High School, awaiting the completion of their present buildings, was housed in the eastern wing of the school and also in portable classrooms in the south yard.

With a combined enrolment of 700 facilities were strained and playground seating, water and sanitary resources had to be improved. Recesses were staggered. Conditions in the portables were not entirely satisfactory, but despite some complaints, the occupation of Errol Street worked well and was far superior to the alternative accommodation suggested at the showground pavilions.

The coming of the University Rural School No 3901 to Errol Street represents one of the more immediately beneficial invasions. Established in July 1915 under Ulysses M. Browne, S.S. 3901 had been devoted to the training of Melbourne Teachers College students. The Rural School at Errol Street had been established a year earlier for the same purpose and when the College Rural was unstaffed in December 1966 it was logical that it should be moved to the spacious site at Errol Street where the rural school tradition had been developed over the years with outstanding success.

Thus the College Rural children once again connected the school with Parkville people, and with them came their library which formed the basis of the present school library. The Parkville parents' zeal to promote the highest quality of education at the school combined with the fierce loyalty of the North Melburnians has created the outstanding feature of parental involvement which is a key to the school's optimism.

The school has been described as "a complex of cross currents, influences and ideas, all relevant, most exciting, and a few distinctive. It seeks as it has done for many years, to respond to the challenges posed by new or modified needs of the pupils by experimentation with approaches seen to be relevant to these changes. Above all, it strives to ensure its service to the community by involving in its forward planning and present occupations." The entire history of the school over its 117 years of existence could not be set down in a work of this length, only the main themes of Victorian education have been traced as they manifested themselves in one particular institution.

Despite a wealth of records the day by day thoughts and feelings of the pupils and teachers, which amounted to their essential involvement in the life of the school, can only be hinted at as the private and ephemeral nature of such personal involvement is rarely recorded. To the observer, however, the indomitable corporate spirit, the quintessence of the century-long accumulation of such individual events and responses, is easily discernible.

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