
History of The Basin

Chapter 4

Teaching Institutions

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Summary

This chapter details the history of teaching institutions in The Basin.

The Basin Primary School was first occupied in December, 1880 with the title "Dandenong Range School No. 2329" on property purchased from William Chandler in Doongalla Road.

In 1899, the school was closed but in 1901 the existing building was moved to a new site on the corner of Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road and reopened.

In 1925, a new school building was opened set further back from the road. Over the years, substantial improvements have been made including a new art room (mid 1970's), addition of the Basin Boys Home Special School buildings (1980), extra land (1980) and a major upgrade of the Administrative section (1989).

Boronia Heights Secondary College began in 1973 as Boronia Technical School and is located in Mount View Road, Boronia. Initial buildings and grounds were basic.

Buildings were added in 1974/75 (Home Economics, Science and Trades/Math), and 1987 (Gym/Music/Drama, Library and Auto).

The school prides itself on its mini school structure and is one of the few schools in Victoria that has successfully maintained this model.

St. Bernadette's Primary School commenced operation in 1983 with approximately 117 children.

Over the years a gymnasium, computerised library and playground equipment have been added. In 1997, a major new addition to the School buildings was completed in the form of St. Bernadette's Community Hall.

The Basin Pre-School Kindergarten commenced operation in 1956 in The Basin Progress Hall but it was not until 1958 that the current special purpose building was opened in Forest Road.

In 1994/95, major upgrades to the building occurred following a turbulent period when the kindergarten nearly closed.

The Goodwin Estate Kindergarten commenced operation in 1980 in a new building in Rome Beauty Avenue.

The Basin Infant Welfare Centre commenced operation in 1944 in a room at The Basin Progress Hall. It was not until 1956 that the current special purpose building was erected on donated land in Forest Road.

Schools

The Basin Primary School

1879 Establishment and Opening

In March 1879, David Dobson, supported by local residents, petitioned the Board of Education for a School. The petition, reproduced on pages 2 and 3, represented parents of 45 School-age children unable to avail themselves of the surrounding schools, the closest being 4 to 5 miles distant.

Inspector John Dennant's report of April 1879 confirmed the need for a School in the area. However, no action followed and on August 30th, Mr Dobson again wrote to the Minister of Public Instruction as follows:

"Permit me (on behalf of the residents of the north east portion of Scoresby and part of Mooroolbark) to respectfully call your attention to the urgency of a School in our District. It is now about 5 months since the Inspector visited the District to report upon it "and from the number of children he saw without ed-

ucation, he led us to believe you would cause the School to be erected without delay. I trust the urgency of our case will be a sufficient excuse for troubling you."

"With regard to myself, I have six children; my oldest I send to School on horse back, but the others are quite neglected. It is a dreadful thing to see children running about almost wild."

William Chandler Junior offered one acre of land for the School situated on the northeast corner of allotment 72B, Parish of Scoresby (today, this would be near the corner of Simpson Road and Doongalla Road). This land was in the then centre of The Basin and the attending children lived in homesteads nearby. This offer was accepted and Mr Chandler was paid 1 pound as compensation.

Tenders for the erection of a wooden School, 24 feet x 16 feet, to accommodate 40 children, and a 3-roomed attached teachers residence were called for. In May 1880, William Swanson was



basin_school_1890.jpg

*The "First" The Basin Primary School built in Doongalla Road in 1880. In 1899, the School was closed. In 1901, this building was moved to the corner of Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road and the School reopened.
Photo circa 1890, courtesy Knox Historical Society*

Schools

dobson_petition_names.gif

Part 1 of a Petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district - February 28, 1879.

awarded the contract at a cost of 437 pounds and ten shillings.

Building operations were completed in November 1880. The School was opened on 10 December, 1880 with the title "Dandenong Range School No. 2329".

The first Head Teacher was Jim Maddern who stayed until February 1881. His 48 pupils (enrolment in 1881) included A. E. Chandler and William Tyner both of whom became M.L.A.'s. Other families represented were the Dobsons,



basin_school_petition_names_1879.gif

Part 2 of a Petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district - February 28, 1879. This is a reproduction of the original map showing only the relevant details. The road junction at allotments 72A, 72B, 74 and 75 is the corner of The Basin-Olinda, Wicks and Sheffield Roads. The School site location shown is opposite where The Basin Theatre is located. Map courtesy Knox Historical Society (H.S. McComb Compilation).

Schools

Kerrs, Kleinerts, and Wicks. The average attendance in 1881 was 27.

1883 School Name Changed

During 1883, under Head Teacher Alice Hammond, the School was renamed "The Basin" as the previous name was too indefinite. This arose after a visit by Inspector Walter Gamble in November 1883 (when the average attendance was 20). He made a recommendation that

"...the School be known as "The Basin" State School No. 2329, North Scoresby. Dandenong Range is too indefinite and is not recognised in the district. The Basin is the local name and is likely to be permanent."

The name was officially adopted by the Department in 1884.

1893 Falling Attendances

By the 1890's, the School attendance had declined with only 18 children attending as at 8th March, 1893. These children are listed below. Ages in years/months in parenthesis as at 1st Jan., 1893. Home location relative to the School in brackets.

Herbert (12/10), Louisa (11/2), Gilbert (8/9), Ettie (7/2), and Kitty (5/9) CHANDLER [200 yards West]. Maud (12/8) and Elsie (7/2) DOBSON [$\frac{1}{4}$ mile West]. Florence (10/1) and Ethel (8/2) CHANDLER [1 mile West]. Lily (11/1), Charlotte (9/0) and Henry (5/0) KEMP [$\frac{1}{4}$ miles West]. John (10/7), and Isobel (12/1) GERAGHTY [$2\frac{1}{2}$ miles North]. Frederick (8/0) GADEL [2 miles West]. Mary (7/0) KING [2



basin_pupils_1892.jpg

Pupils of The Basin State School in 1892

Against Wall - Ada Williams, Frank Gerraty, Isobel Gerraty, Charlotte Dobson, Florence Gerraty, Mr. Treyvaud, William Kerr.

Middle Row - Albert Kerr, John Gerraty, Gilbert Chandler, Isabella Kerr, Clara Baldwin, Maude Dobson, Louise Chandler, Henry Turner.

Front - ? Williams, Wreford Chandler, Ellen Truswell, Bert Chandler, Percy Chandler, Fred Kerr.
Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

$\frac{3}{4}$ miles West. Henry (9/6) LUM [400 yards West]. Ellen (11/6) TRUSWELL [3 miles West].

In early 1893, a number of parents submitted a petition to the Minister for Education as follows:

"As it is probable the School numbered 2329 and known as The Basin School at Bayswater in Fern Tree Gully Shire will become unclassified through want of the statutory number of scholars - the cause being that the School-house is placed in a remote and unaccessible position in the mountain and the approaches thereto are only through private and very low lying lands which are completely inundated with water in the winter months and therefore the children have to sit in wet boots and clothes the whole of the time. In fact the School is in a most inconvenient spot and really serves two families (Dobsons and Chandlers).

It is now respectfully requested that the School-house be removed about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the west on a site on the properties of Messrs J. Bruce or J. J. Miller on the Bayswater Road, The approaches to which would be on made public roads, would avoid parties having to go over the low-lying lands and save the majority of the residents who live to the west of the present site and the children of the two families before mentioned would only have to come about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

If this alteration is made the School would at once become re-established and a great convenience to the district and would be gratefully acknowledged by the undersigned parents.

Susan. Kemp, C. H. Maher, James Kerr, James Jackson, Henry Baldwin, C. H. Intermann, J. Gadd, Moses Truswell, James Jennings, Sarah Joyner, Fred Silk, Robert C. Chandler, Charles King, G. W. Bruce, James J. Miller"

James J. Miller personally gathered information and compiled a list of available scholars at The Basin School, if removed to a more suitable site.

In May 1893, a meeting was held to consider the proposal to move The Basin School to a site on the main road - reported on by District Inspector Dennett, as follows:

"Present: Messrs Miller, Baldwin, W. Chandler, C. Chandler, Leach (grandfather of the boy Lum) and Dr Simpson and Mr J. Dobson, members of the Board of Advice.

A spot to which it is proposed to remove the School is on allotment 74, Parish of Scoresby, commencing about 2 chains from the western boundary. It is suitable ground. Mr J. J. Miller, the owner, offers a block of 2 acres for 25 pounds. The ground to abut the Main Road.

The only objector is Mr Leach. Mr Baldwin is indifferent; in reality he thinks that to remove it such a short distance would be useless. It will be observed from the plan that it is only proposed to remove the School from 48 to 50 chains.

The members of the Board of Advice present men-

James Griffiths

James Griffiths would carry a bag of sweets while travelling by coach. He would throw these to children running beside, thus making them stop to pick them up. It seems he feared that a child would fall beneath the wheels.

tioned that settlement was taking place now in the Dandenong State Forest and that this School in its present position might suit the selectors."

However, the Inspector considered that was not worthwhile incurring the expense of removing the School as it was fairly convenient to all.

In August 1894, the Inspector recommended that the School be made unclassified, since there was little prospect of the average attendance reaching 20. This meant that a less qualified teacher would act as Head Teacher.

Minor repairs and the erection of a new fence to replace one previously destroyed by fire were completed in January 1897 at a cost of 6 pounds 15 shillings.

In April 1897, David Dobson reported in a letter that:

"My son took the tree down that was leaning over The Basin State School but unfortunately it fell onto one of the closets and smashed it to pieces. He had the Forest devil on it, but it was so much burnt away at the root of the tree and the lean was so great towards the School that he had the greatest difficulty to prevent it from smashing the School. It is the girl's closet and I suppose there will have to be another put up. Will you kindly see and oblige."

1899 School Closed

A recommendation to close the School in January 1899 was made by the Correspondent, R. Minns, in view of the fact that there were only 13 pupils on the roll. Closure followed on 9 June 1899. The surnames of the 13 children left were Lum (1), McKay (4), Chandler (4), Pope (1), Gadd (2) and Hayes (1).

An inventory of items when the School closed was as follows:

4 desks, 4 forms, 1 teachers desk, 1 stool, 1 easel, 2 blackboards, 1 table, 1 chair (damaged), 4 spring blinds, 10 framed 2 unframed slates, 5 safety inkwells, 16 porcelain inkwells, 13 good 3 damaged.

Large -World, Australia, Europe, Victoria

Small - Asia, Africa, America

School register, Inspector do, Punishment do, Rolls, Educational reports, Circulars, School his-

Schools

tory of Aust, Empire History, Sullivans Geog Generalised, Sutherlands New Geography, Descriptive Geog of Aust & New Zealand, Agricultural Teacher Book II, Needlework and Cutting out, Health and Temperance, Royal Reader 1 VI, 4 V, 3 IX, 2 III 1 good and 1 much worse, 12 pamphlets, Apparently Drowned, 1 Hackwood Morals, 1 Parkes Health, 1 Physiology, 1 Drill manual, 1 Barnard Smiths Exercises, 1 answers to do, 1 key to I. N. Arithmetic, 5 Colensos Progressive examples, 3 answers to do, 5 arithmetic for Class IV, 3 for Class III, I. I. N. Geography. ! Infantry Drill 1897.

Apparatus - 1 barometer tube, 1 barometer (unfinished), Abt 11b Mercury, 3/4lb Glass tubing, Lever & Fulcrum 4 ft, 1 set of simple pulleys, 1 set of 2 compound pulleys, 1 air pump and receiver, 1 syphon, 1 Bar & Gauge, 1 glass funnel, 1 spirit level, 1 spirit lamp, 1/4pt Methylated Spirits, 1 retort stand, 1 thermometer, 1 model lift pump, Wall sheets - Drawing, Snakebite Silk Accident and Emergencies.

The School building had been used on sundays for Methodist Church services and this continued until 1901.

During the time the School was closed, the attached teachers' residence was rented for 5 months to Mr W. K. Scott of Ferndale.

1900 Parents Request School Move

On June 20th 1900, a deputation consisting of several members of the Ferntree Gully Board of Advice met with the Minister of Education. The Chairman of the Ferntree Gully Board of Advice said that the residents of the district had waited on the Board and asked for their cooperation and

sympathy. They requested that the building be removed about 1½ miles nearer to Melbourne. Some of the children at present had to travel 4 or 5 miles to School.

Mr Collier said that if the School was shifted and reopened it would not interfere with any other School. The Bayswater, Mooroolbark and Fern-tree Gully Schools were at present overcrowded.

Mr Chandler said that if the School was not moved the chances were that it would be burnt down in the summer as it was surrounded by scrub.

The Minister said that he would send an officer of the Department who would inform them of the day and time he would be there. If the report of that officer showed that the facts were as stated by the deputation, he (Dr. Salmon) would make provision for the education of the children.

Inspector Alfred Curlewis visited the area to investigate the feasibility of the School's removal in July 1900. On his recommendation, the School (with attached teachers residence) was moved to a 1 acre site on the corner of Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road purchased from John L. Yeadon for 25 pounds.

The Inspector's reasons for the choice of this site were as follows:

"The owner, John L. Yeadon, agrees to sell one acre, triangular in shape, with a frontage of 4 chains to Bayswater Road, at 25 pounds per acre. The land is good and under crop, the terms are not very extravagant. This site is much superior to land on the other side of the road."

In June 1901, William Chandler wrote

"I wish to purchase the land from which the Basin School No 2329 was removed. It was formerly part of

Arthur Cooper

Distinguished Resident

Member of The Basin Fire Brigade and Batterham Reserve committee for 43 years, President of the Fire Brigade for 14 years, Football President and then Treasurer for 8 and 9 years respectively, Progress Association Treasurer 10 years and Progress Association Life Member. These and many other posts surely qualify Arthur Cooper for a place in The Basin Hall of Fame.

After moving here in 1946, Arthur undoubtedly compiled the best record of meeting attendances among his contemporaries. Always a direct but fair man, he made his opinion well known on many local matters. To quote his own words "I always call a spade a shovel". It was this forthrightness that stood him in good stead in the community.

Coop as he was known, was the guardian of The Basin Football Club's interests for many years, as delegate to the Eastern Suburban League around the time when the Right Honourable Gib Chandler was its president. In 1990, as a tribute to Arthur's unselfish contribution to the club, The "Arthur Cooper Scoreboard" was erected by the Batterham Park Committee, the Football Club with assistance by Knox Council. Arthur was present when the board was unveiled, as were many older residents from local, country and interstate.

After a long illness, Arthur died on 11 November 1990. He will be sadly missed.

my block. I gave it to the Education Department and would like to buy it back."

In December, permission was granted for him to purchase the land (cost unknown).

1901 School Opened on Current Site

Head Teacher Paul Shugg took over the School in July 1901.

In January 1902, Shugg requested that additions be made to the attached teachers residence which then comprised three small rooms. Margaret Shugg also made a plea by letter for additional accommodation. Plans of a proposed addition of 2 rooms were drawn up by District Architect J. B. Cohen. The estimated cost of the project was 220 pounds, but as no further applications were made by the Head Teacher, the building did not eventuate.

In 1905, Mr John L. Yeadon made application to have the fences along the road frontages renewed, as

"stray cattle get in and destroy the young trees and flowers, which I think is a great pity as the teachers and scholars have done good work and have got a beautiful garden, a good class of flowers and shrubs and it is well kept. Mr Gamble the Inspector, will bear me out when I say it is a credit to them."

Inspector Walter Gamble stated that a cyclone fence was urgently needed to protect the School and well-kept garden, and the application was approved.

The School was awarded a certificate for its gardens in 1909.

Early in 1910, Head Teacher William Thomas reported that a steady increase in attendance had led to overcrowding at the School. By March that year, there were 48 children on the roll, and an average attendance of 42 had been reached, so Thomas suggested that temporarily, the problem could be resolved by removing the partition between the schoolroom and the quarters, thus making use of the small residence. Mr Thomas did not occupy the three small rooms of the residence as he had a family of seven children.

On June 20, Building Inspector Neville reported that it would be altogether impractical to remove the wall and chimney dividing the School and quarters, as suggested by the Head Teacher, in order to provide additional space for classrooms. He pointed out that the buildings were in a bad state of repair and it was estimated it would

basin_pupils_1912.jpg

Pupils of Basin Primary School in 1913. Head Teacher Mr. Herb Godden.

Back Row - Myrtle Collier, Cicily Hills, Olive Puddephat, Doris Chandler, Freda Kirsten, Robert Dobson, Harry Dickson, Herb Smith, Jim Dobson, Victor Murrell, George Puddephat, Les Dickson, Laurie Chandler, Stan Collier.

Middle Row - Gladys Collier, Hugh Chandler, Lil Collier, Faith Skinner, Rose Rafferty, Ruby Collier, May Dickson, Alma Collier, Mabel Henderson, ?, Hazel Godden, Wreford Chandler, Steele Murrell.

Front row - Gordon Chandler, Stan Collier, Alfred Chandler, Arthur Collier, Ron Collier, Alan Collier, Eric Collier, Gordon King, ?, ?.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society.

Schools

cost 29 pounds 2 shillings and 6 pence for repairs which were “really necessary.”

Previously Boards of Advice were responsible for a number of schools, but in 1911 School Committees were elected for each School, with members having a more personal interest in the School.

1911 Salvation Army Proposal

In April 1911, Head Teacher William Thomas reported that a meeting of parents had been held to form a parents Committee in connection with The Basin State School and there was one matter of urgency which the meeting asked him to bring under the notice of the Department. Viz.

“The Salvation Army has a boy’s Industrial Home and Farm in this neighbourhood in connection with which they have two schools, one about a quarter of a mile and the other about 1 mile from the above state School. The boys sent there are often badly disposed and have many bad habits and a source of anxiety to the parents whose children attend the State School.

The Army authorities have now decided to move their

School for the bigger boys to a site close to the State School. The two buildings will be about 100 yards apart and the grounds will approach too within one chain of each other. The parents regard this as being exceedingly objectionable and have asked me to bring the matter under your notice with a request that everything possible be done to prevent the erection of the Army School in such proximity to ours. A deputation of parents will probably wait on the Director or Minister of Education as soon as the Parents Committee get going, but as the Army Authorities intend beginning the erection of their School during the present (Easter) holidays I have been asked to write to you as a matter of urgency and ask that, if possible, some steps may be taken to induce the Army Authorities to at least hold their proposal in abeyance until the matter can be more thoroughly gone in to.”

The site of the proposed new School was North of the present State School with a frontage onto Liverpool Road.

Mr A. E. Chandler of Bayswater wrote to Mr Keast, M.L.A., and asked him to oppose the school being placed so close to the State School and stated it was the intention of several of the parents to send their children to other schools



basin_pupil_activity_1914.jpg

Pupil activity at The Basin State School in 1914. Games being played include “the fox”, “geese game” and hopscotch. On the right, some children are gathered around a maypole. Children in the photo include Jim Dobson, Bob Dobson, Ruby Collier, Alma Collier, Edgar King, Doris Chandler, Gordon Chandler, Gordon King, Hazel Gordon and May Dickson.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

should the Salvation Army scheme be carried out.

Mr Archibald C. Chandler of Kilsyth wrote to the Hon. E. H. Cameron, M.L.A., and asked him if he would try and prevent such a shameful affair. He stated that *“if such a thing is allowed it will cause intense bitterness between the residents and the Salvation Army as parents are determined that their children shall not mix with such as are placed under the care of that Institution”*. He described where the school was situated, then added - *“Our children from this side attend same!”*

Mr S. Collier, Chairman of School Committee, called at the Department on 3.5.11, and asked that something be done to induce the “Army” to build on some other portion of its land not so close to 2329. Mr H. R. Chandler, Secretary of the School Committee, also wrote to the Director of Education.

Mr Keast and Mr Cameron, in making their representations to the Minister of Education, enclosed the letters from Mr A. E. Chandler and Mr A. C. Chandler. The Department replied that *“it does not appear a matter in which the Depart-*

ment can interfere” but they will ascertain from the Salvation Army Authorities what they propose to do.

On May 23rd, the Salvation Army from National Headquarters for Australia, 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne, informed the Director of Education that:

“the proposal we have in hand merely deals with the school which has always been connected with our Bayswater Institution and of course is in no sense a Public School.

Judging by the action of Mr Thomas, the Headmaster of The Basin School, he considers the site we had proposed as undesirable and we have endeavoured to meet his difficulties. As a matter of fact, the whole question is in abeyance as far as we are concerned, and we cannot at the moment say what will finally be done.

The delay, however, has nothing to do with Mr Thomas' contentions, but only arose through circumstances affecting our work at Bayswater. We would like it to be quite clear that this is not the establishment of a school, but simply a change of site and of course we are most anxious that nothing should be done to cause conflict.”

On June 8th, William Thomas, Head Teacher, wrote to Hon. E. H. Cameron, M.L.A., re the pro-



basin_committee_1927.jpg

*The Basin State School Committee - 1927
Mr. B. Chandler, Mrs. M. E. Pickett, Mr. A. Collier
Mr. J. Maguire, Mr. H. Chandler, Mr. Sam Collier, Mr. A. Pope.
Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society*

James Griffiths' School Promise

In 1924, when the erection of the "second" Primary School was approved, James Griffith promised that at opening of the new school he would present all children enrolled at the school with a mint condition one shilling coin.

Unfortunately, James Griffith was killed at a tragic accident at the Bayswater railway crossing shortly before the opening of the new school in May, 1925.

James' brother John undertook to make the presentation on his behalf. However, the children did not receive a mint condition coin, much to their disappointment. Instead they each received a used one shilling coin.

posals by the Salvation Army. He stated - *"I believe the Government contributes towards the cost of the boys. If so, they have some hold over them."*

On August 29th, H. R. Chandler, Secretary, School Committee, in again bringing the matter before the Director of Education stated - *"You will understand our anxiety in this matter when I tell you that already cases have occurred where these boys have molested little girls on their way home from school"*.

The School Committee objected to the Army's proposal and suggested that a site about a quarter of a mile away, near No.3, would not be detrimental in any way to the interests of the State School. The signatories were:

Samuel Collier, Chairman; Janet Dobson, Committee; John Collier; Ada J. Chandler; H. R. Chandler, Elizabeth Collier.

On October 11, District Inspector W. A. Cavanagh reported on a meeting held at The Basin to consider the question of the erection of a school for the boys attending the Reformatories established by the Salvation Army near Bayswater. He had been informed that

"the school is to be carried on at the No.3 Home, the place mentioned by parents as being acceptable to them. It is quarter of a mile from the State School. Happily the question has thus been amicably solved, as the Department could hardly raise any legal objections to the erection of a school anywhere on their own ground by the Army Authorities."

In 1912, a shelter shed was erected by a working bee. From a Newspaper report, June 7:

"On Saturday a working bee was held at The Basin State School, the object being to erect a shelter shed. The arrangements were in the hands of the School Committee and all the details had been so carefully

thought out and provided for that, although the work began early in the afternoon yet by 5 o'clock in the evening the building was finished. Mr P. B. Chandler, an expert builder, was made working manager, and he was ably assisted by the Chairman of the Committee, Cr. S. Collier, and the correspondent, Mr H. R. Chandler. The whole affair was an object lesson in what may be done by a number of willing workers when properly organised and wisely directed. During a break in the work, refreshments were provided by the ladies of the district, the tables being presided over by Mesdames Collier, senior and junior. The thoughtfulness of the ladies was much appreciated by the workers and they were tendered hearty thanks. The building is a strong and suitable one, and will no doubt be a very useful adjunct to the school."

"Note: 5 pounds towards the cost had been promised by the Department; E. Kleinert supplied the material at cost of 5 pounds 13 Shillings and 1 pence."

1915 Additional Land

In 1913, Mr H. R. Chandler, Correspondent of the School Committee, drew attention to the smallness of the school for the number of children in attendance and, as the residence adjoining had not been used by the teacher for a number of years, suggested that a door be made into one of the rooms adjoining.

He also stated that the playground was too small, that it had a bad slope as a playground for children and there was no available land for an agricultural plot. He suggested that 1 acre adjoining be purchased from the Salvation Army.

Inspector J. H. Betheras reported that the matter was not very urgent, but needed relief could be given by allowing one of the residence rooms to be used for school purposes. The extra land should be obtained if the price is reasonable.

The earliest existing register of The Basin Primary School was commenced in 1913. Student No. 1 was Robert John Dobson.

In 1914, Mr H. R. Chandler, Correspondent of the School Committee, wrote to The Hon. W. S. Keast, Parliament House, Melbourne, asking him to urge upon the Minister of Education the necessity of providing extra accommodation. Mr Keast forwarded letter of 19.2.14 to the Minister of Education. The Department replied that "in view of the large number of urgent works already authorized that there must be some delay in having the works carried out."

Herbert Godden, Head Teacher, advised the Department that "the quarters are now vacant and are being used for cloak room, infant room and library, museum, etc."

The average attendance having reached 40,

expenditure of 90 pounds was authorized towards improving lighting, ventilation, general repairs and renovating the school, following intervention in the matter by the Hon. W. S. Keast, M.L.A. All the work was completed by November 1914.

The first Inspector's report still held at the school was written by Mr I. H. Betheras in 1914:

"The grounds have been much improved since my visit last year...the School Committee is taking a lively interest..." He reported a "good supply of school requisites" and "was pleased to see that word-building is used in the teaching of spelling - the learning of disconnected words is out of date."

The School Committee's pleas for additional land as an extra play area for the children resulted in the purchase of additional land costing 50 pounds, when the adjacent block, owned by the Salvation Army was obtained in March 1915. Following the purchase, an exchange of areas between the Department and the Methodist Church took place.

Mr Betheras repeated his appreciation of the

improved appearance of the grounds as he *"used to be ashamed to pass by this school and grounds"* and noted that the boys had *"sold the produce of their agricultural plots for the benefit of the patriotic fund."*

The present football field was added in 1915.

Of interest from 1925, and still displayed at the school, are an Honour Roll of the 1914-1918 War, a clock, the registers, and a photograph of the school committee.

In 1918, Inspector J. McOwan reported *"In Tables and Spelling more smart drill work is needed as well as constant recapitulation"*.

Head Teacher Elisha Robertson complained of cramped conditions at the school in March 1919 stating that *"...40 in the one room is not fair to the children or teachers"*. However, Inspector J. McOwan found that accommodation was quite adequate. Average attendance for March 1919 was 56; April 54; May 50; whilst there was provision for 70 children on a 12 square foot basis.

In regard to teaching, he noted that *"instruc-*



basin_school_ladies_num_1920.jpg

*Local ladies at The Basin State School circa 1920. Most likely involved in fundraising or School improvements.
1. Mrs Frank Collier, 2. Mrs Tom Clarke, 3. Mrs Dave Pope, 4. Mrs Esther Goodwin, 5. Mrs Norman, 6. Mrs Janet Dobson, 7. Mrs Martin, 8. Mrs Florence Smart, 9. Mrs Annie Burden, 10. Mrs Parr, 11. Mrs Allen, 12. Mrs Bill Collier, 13. Mrs Serena Henderson, 14. Mrs Albert Collier, 15. Mrs Bird, 16. Mrs Pickett, 17. Mrs Jessie Chandler, 18. Mrs Ada Chandler, 19. Mrs George Feidler, 20. Mrs Cawley, 21 Mrs Louise Maguire, 22. Mrs Pat Rafferty.*

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Schools

tion was carried on actively in accordance with sound methods of teaching”.

However, in 1920, District Inspector Burgess noted *“the teacher now in charge..found the school in a backward state”* and advised him to *“concentrate on English and Arithmetic mostly for the rest of the year”*.

A considerable increase in attendance in February 1921 necessitated the supply of 20 additional desks. Head Teacher H. Henry. Berry wrote: *“...Since Christmas, I have had many new pupils and none have left. There are now 70 pupils who attend regularly and it’s likely that there will soon be more...”*

Inspector Burgess reported that *“the Head Teacher has an easy, friendly manner...He has the children here well before 9:00 a.m. and late after 4 of their own free will.”*

Transport was still a problem. Children, often barefooted, walked, cycled or rode. Winter conditions were so bad that some tots were carried to school by their mothers for distances up to three miles. Special events enjoyed then were Arbor Days complete with Maypole Dances, Concerts, happily arranged by Mr. Berry, “Bird Days”, and a picnic to Mordialloc by special steam train.

In 1922, District Inspector Burgess reported that *“attendance has been interfered with by the ravages of scarlet fever, mumps and chicken pox”* and directed the Head Teacher to *“train the children to put their dinner papers and litter into some receptacle”*. He also noted that some *“interesting occupation work is being done with stringy bark fibre”*.

In 1923, District Inspector Henderson noted that *“a girl pupil has a sweet and sympathetic voice”* and was impressed by the Honour Roll of the 1914-1918 War as he mentioned it in a number of reports. Apparently the Honour Roll was erected before the end of the Great War as the date for the end of war has never been added. He also reported that the pupils *“have a good grasp of the influence exerted by the British during the Napoleonic Wars”*.

General repairs were carried out and two new outhouses and tanks supplied in 1923 at a cost of 75 pounds 15 shillings and 6 pence.

In 1924, Inspector Henderson reported that *“boys keep the grounds free from lunch papers”*.

1925 New Building

Following Inspector William Henderson’s second

recommendation, and intervention into the matter of accommodation by the Hon. F. Groves. M.L.A. and W. Tyner, M.L.C., approval for the erection of a new school was finally obtained in September 1924. The new wooden building 43 feet x 24 feet (partitioned to form 2/21 feet 6 inches x 24 feet plus storeroom) and costing 934 pounds 11 shillings and 6 pence, was officially opened on May 22, 1925. Mr Henderson reported that *“the school is beautifully situated. It would be difficult to secure a better position for a school building”*. However, he also noted that *“the school library has become almost obsolete”*.

In 1927, the Committee asked for a subsidy in order to erect a shelter shed which was completed in June. Inspector Henderson noted that *“the school library contains some suitable books. To encourage the reading habit is one of the most important functions of an elementary school”*.

In 1929, a tennis court was constructed at the school - apparently without Departmental authority, but the Minister (Hon. H. I. Cohen, K.C., M.L.C.) officially opened it on November 15th, 1929.

In 1936, eleven years after the construction of the new school, 68 pounds was spent on painting and general repairs, and the old tanks were replaced.

Average attendance at the school for June 1939 - on the occasion of Inspector E. A. O’Brien’s visit - was 41; net enrolment 72. The Inspector noted the need for internal renovation, and repairs to the out-offices. The latter, a more urgent task, was immediately attended to. Repairs to fences and painting were left until the following year, when the average attendance for October was 56, (net enrolment 79).

For years, the District Inspectors, Head Teachers and the Committee had advocated the provision at the school of a second exit to facilitate ingress and egress, particularly in the event of a fire, but their appeals were repeatedly ignored. Finally in April 1941, the new doorway was installed.

During the renovations carried out in August 1941, children were housed in a room at the adjacent Salvation Army Home for four days.

In applying for a new tank in May 1942, Head Teacher Thomas Reardon stressed the need for a large (800 gal.) one as *“... About 80 children have*

their lunches at this school and a plentiful supply of water is necessary”.

By 1943, the net enrolment having reached 94, provision of increased accommodation became a matter of urgency. H. Reardon’s application for an additional room was inquired into by Inspector J.O. Archer who stated in June that “... *In 1938 there were 72 pupils. In the district there are about 20 children aged between 3½ and 5½ years and probably 14 will be enrolled by the beginning of next year. Five young children have been refused admission during the present term. In all likelihood, six of the present pupils will be transferred to secondary school next year. The settlement is of a permanent nature and an enrolment of between 90 and 100 will probably be maintained for some time”.*

In his opinion, additional accommodation of a pavilion classroom for 35 pupils was necessary.

The Minister promptly approved the provision of a standard classroom measuring 24 feet x 22 feet 6 inches, costing 699 pounds too erect, with an additional 21 pounds allowed for painting the existing building, but apart from the approval, little progress was made.

Only after a number of representations to the

Hon. G. L. Chandler, M.L.C., and the Hon. G. H. Knox, M.L.A., by the School Committee, was any positive action taken. In 1946, The Basin Methodist Church was rented, pending the erection of the additional room. The leased premises were vacated on July 19, 1946, and the new premises occupied on July 22.

During his inspection, District Inspector J.O. Archer noted “*there is excellent activity in securing equipment: a new sewing machine, 20 kindergarten chairs, a chain measure and sporting materials... The Social Service League sent 4 pounds 10 shillings and 3 dozen eggs to the Children’s Hospital and 65 packages to the Food for Britain Appeal”.*

In 1947, Inspector Archer commended the planting of shrubs and noted that the school had been awarded the A.N.A. Prize for the most improved grounds in the district. He also commended the provision of equipment “*a fine five valve wireless, electric gramophone and a dozen records, a projector and 60 films. ... have been obtained”.* Of the pupils he wrote “*they express themselves very well in writing. ..especially in graphic vigorous style. They do not express themselves so well orally”.*



basin_school_1946.jpg

The “Second” Basin Primary School corner Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road, circa 1946. This building was built in 1925 and replaced the original one moved to this site in 1901.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society.

Schools

Head Teachers & Principals - The Basin Primary School	
James Maddern	10/12/1880 - 9/2/1881
Alice Maud Hammond	1881 - 1889
Hector Henderson Treyvaud	1889 - 1892
Christina E. Brooker	1892 - 1894
Sarah Williamson	1895
Rhonda E. Hall	1895
Florence Hopkins	1895 - 1896
Joseph H. Smith	1896
Edith I.A. Bannister	1896
Charles E. Sproston	1896 - 1897
Mary J. McLachlan	1897
Mary J.J. Young	1897
Elinor Oliver	1897 - 1899
Paul Shugg	1901 - 1905
Philip E. Smyth	1905 - 1907
George P. Hibberd	1907
William Thomas	1908 - 1912
Martin Clinton	1913
Herbert F. Goddern	1913 - 1918
Elisha Robertson	1919 - 1920
Henry A. Berry	1920 - 1925
Henry A. Braddy	1925 - 1928
John C. Brown	1928
Thomas W. Elliot	1928 - 1939
Joseph M. Roach	1939 - 1940
Thomas H. Reardon	1940 - 1944
John Smith	1944 - 1950
John I.C. Elliott	1950 - 1951
Henry T. O'Toole	1952
Alexander Morris	1952 - 1954
Ruben Koetsveld	1954 - 1961
Alfred M. Hollow	1961 - 1962
Grahame H. Ball	1962 - 1963
John W. Shilcock	1963 - 1964
Reginald J. Jackman	1964 - 1968
Roy G. White (First principal)	1968 - 1969
John F. Kerr	1969 - 1974
Alfred E. Marshman	1974 - 1977
Neville M. Heffernan	1977 - 1979
Josephine R. Burman	1979 - 1980
Ronald G. Fry	1980 - 1984
Ian Green	1984 - 1993
Anne Tierney	1993 - 1999
Linda Cooney	2000 -

In 1948, District Inspector J.W. Elijah noted that *“new entrance gates with pergola attachments have been erected. ...a basketball court has been constructed”*. He also stated *“It should be placed on record how satisfactorily cooperatives the School Committee and Mothers’ Club have been with the Head Teacher in building up such an excellent store of equipment for their school”*.

1949 Additional Land

In July 1949, the School Committee inquired into the possibility of obtaining a block of land for a teacher’s residence. An offer by the Salvation Army of a 1/4 acre block adjoining the grounds was considered, but the Department preferred a larger site. Hence a one acre block, valued at 450 pounds was purchased from the Salvation Army in June 1952.

In his report in 1950, Inspector J.W. Elijah noted that *“accommodation needs will become pressing ... a special report will be submitted”*. Regarding pupils’ work he noted *“a commendable feature of recorded work in both history and geography is the use of well executed diagrammatic sketches”*.

In 1951, Inspector H. A. Fliegner noted that *“the recently constructed tennis court will be a definite asset. All in all the school is a very happy place with children and teachers striving zealously”*.

1953 New Classroom

Pending the erection of an extra classroom recommended by Inspector J. Elijah in December 1950, the Department leased the premises of The Basin Methodist Church until December 1952. A prefabricated timber classroom to house 50 infants, was occupied on February 3, 1953.

Provision of a sick bay and storeroom requested by the Committee in February 1953 was refused, for as J. Webster, Inspector of Works stated: *“...The incidence of sickness during school hours doesn’t appear to be greater than in other schools of similar size and type... the existing store room is 6 feet x 4 feet ... considered ... adequate for storage of stationery...”*

By June 1954, two additional tanks, drinking taps, (and a flagpole) were installed on the south west side of the building.

In July 1954, the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) was advised by the School Committee, that electric light and power had been extended to the newly erected prefabricated classroom.

An application from the Committee in December 1954 to build a bicycle shelter was acknowledged thus: “...If you submit to this office for prior approval, full details, plans and specifications, and quotations, consideration will be given to a subsidy of 2 pounds for 1 pound basis, maximum Departmental share - 150 pounds, towards a bicycle shelter provided that funds are available when you make application”. The application, made in August 1955, was approved, but requests for the provision of a library and projection room, and an additional shelter shed were rejected on the grounds that “...existing commitments will not permit (the Department) undertaking the erection at present of rooms other than class rooms”.

As recommended by the Inspector of Works in 1951, painting and external renovations costing

482 pounds and 10 shillings were completed in March 1955.

To relieve the problem of limited accommodation it became necessary once again to lease the Methodist Church premises. Inspector R. P. McLellan urged in February 1957, immediate occupation of the leased premises, for he noted “...The present net attendance has risen sharply to 187. Accommodation at 12 sq. ft. per pupil is available for 177 pupils. Immediate steps are being taken to recommend the building of an additional classroom.”. Plans for the additions were finalized on October when the School Committee was informed that “...a cloakroom at present being used as a staffroom is to be vacated as soon as a new additional classroom has been erected. A permanent staffroom will be located in the new classroom. Approval has been granted for the



basin_school_land_acquisitions.gif

The Basin State School Land Acquisitions 1902 - 1960

*A. Purchased from Mary Ann Bruce - 1902. E. Purchased from Salvation Army - 1915.
F. Purchased from Salvation Army - 1951. G. Purchased from Salvation Army - 1952.
D. Purchased from Methodist Church - 1924. B. Purchased from Methodist Church - 1960.
C. Purchased from Methodist Church - 1960.*

Map courtesy Knox Historical Society (H.S. McComb Compilation).

Schools

The Hanging Shoe Mystery

Since 1983, one or more pairs of shoes have been hanging from powerlines in Mountain Highway outside The Basin Primary School.

Legend has it that the shoes first appeared in 1983 when "Justin" (aged 10) was attacked by bullies who stole his sneakers and threw them over the powerlines.

Whenever the shoes fall off, or the power company removes them, another pair quickly reappears.

It seems that there will always be a pair of shoes hanging from these powerlines.

provision of additional hat and coat racks and these will be installed in the cloakroom as soon as it is vacated".

1958 New Buildings

The new buildings, erected at a cost of 4,770 pounds were occupied on 17 February 1958. They included a 24 feet x 24 feet classroom, a 16 feet x 12 feet staffroom and a 16 feet x 12 feet office. A further 65 pounds was spent on painting the structure.

Committee Secretary R. Dobson drew the attention of the Department, in June 1958, to the urgent need for improved sanitary facilities at the school. Adverse reports on a number of schools including The Basin, appeared in the local paper in February and April 1958. Then, in May 1959, Dobson listed the following works deemed necessary:

"1. About five years ago we understood a new boundary fence along the Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road had been approved, but as yet, nothing has been done. The existing fence is a disgrace to the school and is falling down.

2. The Committee would like to draw your attention to the lack of shelter shed accommodation. There is space for only about 50 children and there are 200 pupils at the school. The shelter sheds have not been extended for over 20 years.

3. The promised extension to the existing area of asphalt has not been made with the continual increase in the number of pupils attending the school. These extensions are badly needed.

4. The drainage needs attention. The water from the new buildings constructed last year runs anywhere...

We would like to point out the urgent need to provide a new toilet block at the school, especially now that water is available. The present facilities are totally inadequate for the number of children present..."

Having received no reply to the above letter for some time, Dobson appealed to the Hon. Sir George Knox, M.L.A., in June, to intervene and

expedite proceedings. In reply to his letter, the Minister explained to Sir George (in October) that he could not comply with the Committee's requests, as the Government's policy was to use available funds to supply urgently needed classrooms. Septic sewerage could only be provided if a new toilet block was being built, or if no municipal sanitary service was available.

Net enrolment at the school for July 1959 was 245. Additions including a classroom and staffroom were completed in November. Approval was given in November 1960 for 223 pounds to be spent on reblocking the floor of Room 2 and external painting.

Under Head Teacher Mr. Koetsveld, sport flourished with The Basin children playing a prominent part in local meetings and establishing new records. Children travelled by bus and grounds were enlarged by the removal of the church. The school by this time had eight classrooms, graded and sealed areas, and population of about 340 children.

1962 New Buildings

As a result of years of pressure exerted by the Committee, Mothers' Club, Shire of Fern Tree Gully, the Minister of Agriculture (G.L. Chandler) and others, regarding the sanitary facilities, the Minister issued the following statement: "*...in accordance with the recent announcement by the Hon. the Premier, the P.W.D. Is being asked to submit a scheme for septic sewerage at The Basin school? The matter will be given further consideration when the scheme is to hand from that Department...*" The letter was dated 5 May 1961. Installation of a new out-office block, fire service, and septic tank was carried out in July 1962 at a cost of 4,838 pounds.

Two new light timber classrooms, each 24 feet x 24 feet and a 24 feet x 8 feet storeroom, were added to the school in October 1962.

In 1963, District Inspector R. H. Brown reported that "*an area has been established for items of permanent play apparatus. This section has been boxed and filled with sand to provide very good facilities for younger pupils*".

With an enrolment of 315, District Inspector L. H. Blake reported in 1964 that "*present accommodation - 8 classrooms - is sufficient*". He found the Grade 5 pupils "*obviously entranced with their dramatic work*" and that "*many chil-*

dren - especially in Grades 1 and 2 have made exceptionally good progress in reading."

Reticulated water supply was connected during 1964, and a special committee devised an overall plan for grounds improvements.

A television set and a typewriter were purchased during 1965.

With an enrolment of 346 in 1966, accommodation was insufficient and a small group of Grade 4 children was taught in the staffroom. Inspector Blake reported the tone and discipline of the school as "*excellent*" and commended the "*delightful and educatively valuable activities period for beginners*".

By 1967, an additional room had been added and a basketball court had been constructed to the stage of levelling. The garden area near the present canteen was planted with camellias and rhododendrons donated by Mr J. Chandler of Como Nurseries, and gas heating was installed throughout the school.

1968 First Principal

In 1968, the school had its first Principal appointed, Mr. Roy White, due to a reclassification of the school. The opening of Boronia Heights Primary School that year meant that although the school population declined in numbers, with enrolment dropping to 267, an improved staffing provision meant that smaller class sizes could be established. The Mothers' Club began operating a canteen on a daily basis.

In 1971, District Inspector H. Hobbs "*found this to be a most interesting school*". He was particularly impressed with "*the sincere regard for all round personality development of the pupils*" and the conscious effort of staff to preserve "*a close personal attachment towards the children*". He also noted that several parents had contacted him "*to express their pride in the school and their appreciation of the work of the principal and staff*".

Under the next Principal, Mr. John Kett, affectionately known as "Jack", the school was



basin_staff_1980.jpg

Staff members of The Basin Primary School - 1980

Back Row - Ellen Larsen, Deborah Slatter, Kay Purdey, Vivian Clissold, Lyn Wilson, Rob Hopman, Lillian Smith, Jan Hutchins.

Helen Wakelam, Kath Robinson, Peter Ridgewell, Ian Laird, Aided Crawl, Geoff Easy, Debra Rhodes, Goethe Dabblers, ?.

Jan Donnelly, ?, Don Brown, Ron Fry, Bill ?, Debbie Roberts, Nola Bailey.

Photo from The Basin Primary School Centenary booklet.

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praised for its *"sincere regard for all round personality development of the Pupils"*.

1972 Library Built

Evidence of community support was clearly shown in 1972, when the library was built with an Education Department grant of \$7000, and a local contribution of \$4000. During the year two additional classrooms were built, and a staffroom modified at a total cost of \$17,000.

1972 Yumbunga Camp

In November 1972, children and teachers from The Basin were the first group to use the newly established Ferntree Gully District Camp at Yumbunga. Lake Eppalock. Principal Jack Kett and Committee members Kevin Gale and Max White represented the school on the Management Committee which brought the camp into existence and staff and parents have been involved in the management and improvement of the camp since then. Mrs Thoren of the school canteen and her husband became the camp's first manageress and caretaker. and since then two other couples from The Basin have held those positions.

By 1975, there were 460 children attending the school and 13 classrooms were in use.

1976 Art Craft Room

The art craft room, built at a cost of \$29,000, was brought into use in 1976.

In this year School Committees were replaced by School Councils whose duties include tendering advice to the Principal and Staff regarding the general educational policy of the school, and ensuring that all money received by the Council is spent for proper purposes. Councils are required to ensure that buildings and grounds are kept in good condition. and may make recommendations regarding improvements and alterations. The Council at The Basin Primary School consisted of 8 members elected by parents and 4 teachers elected by teachers, all of whom held office for two years; the Principal and 2 members nominated annually by the Mothers' Club. Two other members may be appointed by Council for a term of up to two years.

1977 Enrolment Peaks

In 1977, the school enrolment was 497 and five portable classrooms were on site to accommodate the students and classes. Mr. Neville Heffernan was Principal and will be remembered for the work he undertook to clean up The Basin school

The Basin Primary School Mower Saga

A ride-on mower purchased by the school in 1990 to enable the school community to cut the grass of the large school grounds was much sought after by thieves.

Over a number of years the mower was stolen four times but was recovered each time.

One time the mower was recovered from Bairnsdale after the Police traced the serial number on the motor.

Twice thieves were caught red-handed by a Police helicopter and Police vehicles whilst removing the mower from the school grounds.

Another time thieves had removed the mower from its storage area but were disturbed and fled the scene.

by arranging to replace the inadequate toilet facilities with modern covered ones. He dealt very diplomatically with the Salvation Army and the Education Department to achieve a deal over disputed land between The Salvation Army Special school and The Basin school.

The school was given permission to use the gym in the Salvation Army Special School and barbed-wire fences and dairy cows made a trip over to use the gym a most interesting one.

In 1978, after the new toilet block was completed, District Inspector L. McMahon noted little evidence of progress in grounds improvements. During his review he met with members of the school community and discussed procedures which could assist in this regard.

In 1979, the school began a focus on its environment. The oval was replanted and sown, an adventure playground was constructed, the car park was graded and gravelled, a barbecue area was planted and paved, much planting and site works were undertaken enabling the school to win environmental awards from the Australian Natives Association.

Four well known district names were chosen for house teams at the school. These were "Miller", "Doongalla", "Ferndale" and "Chandler". The Eastern Roselea was also chosen for the school emblem.

Painting and renovations were completed early in 1980, and further adventure playground equipment was erected. The unused Salvation Army Special School buildings were added to The Basin Primary school and portable classrooms were removed from the main site. Negotia-

tions were under way to purchase the land between the two sets of buildings and a netball court was constructed.

1980 Centenary

1980 was a “BIG” year for the school, celebrating its Centenary in fine fashion, with many events that involved all segments of the school community. Painting and renovations were completed, further adventure playground equipment was installed, the now unused Basin Boys Home Special School buildings were added to the school buildings and portable classrooms were removed from the main site. Negotiations were well under way to purchase the land between the two sets of buildings and a netball court was constructed. The school Centenary celebrations are detailed in the Events chapter.

The then Principal, Ron Fry lead a team of parents, teachers and students who believed strongly in the identity of their school, its environment and special nature. During his period at the school his services were required often by the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education and the school was run in his absence by Don Brown, the Vice-Principal, a local identity.

In 1985, the school was involved in Victoria’s 150th year celebrations. A weather station was constructed and near the station a time capsule was embedded in concrete and buried. It contains a piece of work from every child at the school, video and audio tapes, school council minutes of the period, photographs and school paraphernalia. The capsule is due to be recovered and opened in 2035.

1985 Recycle Shop

The school opened a “Recycle Shop” in 1985 in a small shop beside the post office. Garments were received by the shop and sold at a price set by the owner. The school received a proportion of the selling price. It operated as a fund-raising effort for the school and to assist the local community. The shop was manned by volunteers from the local community and parents from the school. After 4 successful years of operation, the shop closed in 1989 due to difficulties in manning it.

The school continued to develop and grow. With the emphasis on local development of school policies and programmes, the school had to identify the significant qualities that make The Basin individual in its nature and cater for these special qualities.

In 1984, Ian Green became principal and brought energy and character to the school. He was instrumental in bringing together all the strengths within the school community to ensure that the school maintained a modern yet strong learning environment for its students. He reorganised working bees to cope with the enormous task of maintaining the largest primary school grounds in Melbourne. He restructured the internal and external car park and pick up areas to ensure safe delivery and pick up of students by a highly mobile school community. He negotiated for the school to gain ownership of an adjacent department building (previously used as a Teachers Residence), and negotiated to transfer the property to Knox Council to enable the establishment of The Basin Community House.

1989 Major Building Upgrade

Ian was instrumental in the designing of a Master Plan that will enable the school to grow in an organised way, rather than the ad hoc compromises that so often affect the development of schools. This lead on to a major upgrade of the administrative section of the School in 1989.

1995 New Classrooms

Anne Tierney took over from Ian Green in 1993. In 1995, four classrooms were placed on the land between the existing “Junior” and “Senior” buildings. The classrooms were from a school which had closed down. The Department relocated the classrooms and refurbished them as a means of “connecting” the two school buildings. The school now had 5 permanent buildings, unlike many schools which have only one permanent and several portables.

In the late 1990’s, the school adopted a policy of compulsory uniforms but the older children were reluctant to adopt the uniform.

In 2000, Linda Cooney took over from Anne Tierney and she lead a push to enforce the compulsory uniform. With the provision of up to date uniform options including bomber jackets, divided skirts and gym skirts, all children are now happy to wear it with pride. In summer terms, school hats are also compulsory outside. Passers by now see neat and trendy children playing in the extensive school grounds.

The school has had a full time Physical Education programme for many years and excels in sporting events, regularly beating much bigger

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schools at District and State level, in Netball, Football, Athletics and Bat Tennis.

In 2001, the school became part of a State research project, called Science in Schools, involving students academically in a variety of Science studies. The project is a Global Classroom project using the Internet, researching and comparing environmental issues with a school in New Zealand. The students use computers daily, have e-pals across the world and are involved in teleconferencing.

2002 Queens Golden Jubilee

In 2002, the school was selected to be Australia's only contributor to the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, through a commissioned Art Project, the Rainbow of Wishes sculpture. This sculpture has the wishes of children from one school from every Commonwealth country incorporated into the actual sculpture. So now the children from The Basin Primary School are an integral part of Commonwealth history!

One of the schools greatest strengths has always been community involvement - and the school continues to promote this by encouraging local organisations to make full use of the grounds. In 2002, the school is home to The Basin Brownies, The Basin Wildcats Basketball

Club, as well as a martial arts club, callisthenics groups and a Dog Training school.

The school is fortunate to have one of the largest playgrounds in the State with large ancient oak trees shading many of the school buildings. Unfortunately, in 2002, an arborist's report found some of these trees diseased and they were removed.

Boronia Heights College

The Need for a New School

The late 1960's and early 1970's was a time of great change in the newly proclaimed City of Knox. Large tracts of land, formerly predominantly orchards and market gardens, were subdivided and transformed into housing estates, eagerly snapped up by baby boomers with young families looking to attain the "Australian Dream" of home ownership.

Knox was growing rapidly; the average annual rate of population growth in Knox between the 1966 and 1971 censuses was 9.3%. House and land packages were relatively cheap in the fledgling outer Eastern suburbs, however, the comprehensive infrastructure of services associated with the older inner suburbs had not yet been established.

The large and rapid population rise led to an



boronia_heights_staff_1973.jpg

*Founding staff members of Boronia Heights Technical School - 1973
Photo courtesy Knox News*

increased need for schools in the area. A number of primary schools and a new technical and high school were built in the mid to late 1960s to accommodate the burgeoning student population. Demand continued to outstrip supply, however, and local schools were soon lobbying for more services.

In 1970, FA Mitchell, Principal of Knox Technical School, on behalf of the Knox Technical School Advisory Council, wrote to the then member for Scoresby, Geoff Hayes, regarding the “phenomenal” expected enrolment increases. Mitchell enclosed with this letter a case proposing that a new technical school be opened in 1971 in Boronia. The case contained statistics which showed an increase in projected enrolments over all of the next seven years except one and pointed out that places at existing high and technical schools fell short of the number of students who required placement. The case also contained a breakdown of projected enrolments based on proportional estimates for each post primary school; the only one expected to exceed capacity for the next three years was Knox Technical School. Knox was already using the sick bay, a staff room and the model office as classrooms. The Principal was concerned that use of practical classrooms would be prohibitive with larger numbers of students. This concern would have been due to the fact that technical school classrooms, and therefore class sizes, were smaller than high school classrooms.

The Advisory Council thus saw the provision of another technical school as “priority one”.

The rationale for establishing a technical school rather than a high school in Boronia was simply that there was already a high school in Boronia and it was common practice at this time to establish technical schools where there were none in the area. Geoff Hayes duly made representation to the then Minister of Education, LHS Thompson, who acknowledged student pressure facing Knox Technical School and advised that, while he was aware “...that additional facilities appear to warrant consideration in the near future...” he could not advise when an additional school would be provided.

The District Inspector of Schools at the time, MA Buchanan, also requested the provision of a coeducational technical school at Boronia for the start of the 1971 school year, as did A L Harris,

Acting Staff Inspector, on behalf of the Eastern Division Placement Committee. It was, however, to be over two years before this school was established.

Establishment

In 1972, the Victorian Education Department purchased just over ten acres of land, bordered by Forest, Mount View and Harcourt Roads and Paisley Avenue, from Donald and Laurence Maguire, both of Boronia, who were settling their father’s (John Maguire) estate. An additional five acres adjoining this land was purchased in 1973 from J P Vincent Pty. Ltd and T C Porter Pty. Ltd. A further four acres was acquired in 1975 from J O G and A E Johnson, bringing the total area of the site to over nineteen acres, or over eight hectares. The Education Department paid a total of \$129,500 to secure land for the Boronia Technical School site.

Boronia Technical School opened its doors in February 1973, with a foundation student body of 163 students, 13 teaching and 4 non teaching staffs. Ken Baldwin was the founding Principal. From the outset, the school was set apart from its contemporaries, both physically and in its philosophy that “...education should concern itself with areas outside of traditional schooling...”. The general classrooms were based on the “open classroom” design model. There were no walls between classrooms; rooms were sectioned by the use of fabric or removable cardboard concertina partitions. This particular “experiment” was not successful, mainly due to the noise levels associated with running several classes in such an open space, and partition walls were erected by the mid 1980s.

In its first year of operation, the school offered a core curriculum to students where everyone took the same subjects.

Late in 1973, the school introduced a core and elective system, where students followed a common year level core but chose their own electives. At that time, electives were a fairly unusual offering and students took time to adapt to the new system. It was only the second school in Victoria to offer such choice. In 2003, the core and elective system still operates progressively from year 8 and underpins the school’s early philosophy of catering to individual student needs by offering a range of subjects in which students are interested.

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Early Conditions

The early days of the school saw a sea of mud and dust. Early photographs show the state of the grounds with its oval as a rutted expanse of mud plain, and truck tracks creating massive welts through the slush of the play area. In an article published in the Free Press of 2 July 1974, the headline reads

“School in a Frenzy: Portables on Barren Land”

and continues ...

“It was as if the department was playing a dirty joke on them ... [by placing them on]... a site that was either a dust bowl or mudpie, depending on the weather”.

In State Parliament the question was asked

“Is it true that a bulldozer is submerged in the pool of mud that is Boronia Technical School’s oval?”

The original buildings consisted of amenities building (incomplete) and four portables - in halves. The amenities building contained the boiler room, toilets, canteen, music room (used for PE) and a sick room (used as an Office). The Library was in the canteen delivery area. Early classes were rostered with girls and boys attending on alternate days until the amenities building was completed.

In 1974, six more portable classrooms arrived but had no drainage, water, heat or other facilities. The Humanities Building was complete but students had to place their shoes in cabinets outside the building in an effort to keep the mud outside. The Home Economics and Science block was completed in 1975 and construction started on the Trades/Maths blocks. Home Economics was slow to take off as most of the ovens were gas - which hadn’t been connected to school yet!

No additional construction occurred after 1975 for 10 years and the school stood half-built, surrounded by portable classrooms until 1985 when building of the final stage commenced.

Mini Schools

The establishment of a mini school structure at Boronia Technical School was a staff led innovation. It was introduced in mid 1974 and was designed to preserve some of the unique benefits of working in a small group.

The mini schools were originally named A, B and C. In 1975, a fourth mini school, D, was formed, through a division of A school, and in 1977 all staff were divided equally into the four mini schools. A fifth mini school, E, operated in

the early 1980s in portables near the driveway entrance. Mini school coordinators were elected by members of the mini school: they were to be “representative of, and responsible to, their particular mini school”. Each mini school was vertically structured to year 11 (technical schools only went to year 11) and operated in a specific wing and form home rooms were located within that wing. In addition, each mini school adopted its own philosophy of teaching, where subject areas and curriculum were developed within mini schools operating separate timetables, and its own behavioural approach under the umbrella of school wide expectations. Decisions were reached cooperatively at weekly meetings and mini schools were encouraged to develop individually and therefore create alternatives for students, staff and parents to experience different educational approaches. Each mini school used its own philosophy (below) to emphasise the particular type of relationships sought, to draw attention to the focus of its courses and thereby distinguish one mini school from the other. Mini schools openly competed for enrolments and students chose which mini school they wished to participate in on the basis of this information.

Mini school Philosophies

The establishment and consolidation of the mini school structure can be seen to be a product of the significant social and political changes which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Baby boomers grew up and began to challenge existing institutions, including the way children were being educated. This period was a time of societal reconstruction, particularly in regard to the beginning of the renegotiation of the traditional division of labour and the way this impacted on other community expectations such as work and leisure. The “grass roots” concept of education, the belief that local schools were best placed to develop their own curricula according to the needs of their specific communities, and thereby ensure that education was more meaningful and relevant to its students, gained support.

Curriculum restraints externally imposed by the Education Department were relaxed in the 1970s, enabling teachers to develop their own courses of study. The only constraints were imposed by the community and the prescribed knowledge required to pass external examinations at senior secondary school. New ways of teach-

Principals - Boronia Heights College	
Ken Baldwin	1973 - 1983
Prue Hewitt	1984 - 1993
Arthur Nilsson	1993 - 2000
Gray Ryan	2000 -

ing, particularly in sciences and new technologies, emerged. In addition, many young teachers of this era were influenced by the radical thought and experimentation in education such as that expounded in books by Ivan Illich and Postman and Weingartner. For many, teaching was a political activity and the mini school system was an effective way of offering a combination of traditional and more radical ideas in education. A major reason why this system flourished is because, as a technical school its educational focus was on technology. For many students, external exams were not relevant and staff and students were not confined to teach and learn merely in order to pass exams.

Mini school A, in 2003 East Saw itself as the more traditional school. In relation to the other mini schools, it had a more structured timetable, and more “formal” classes. However, informal and friendly staff relationships were encouraged.

Mini school B, in 2003 North Was concerned with the individual development of students and provided greater opportunity for choice within the timetable, which encouraged self-directed education. It offered a wide variety of social learning experiences and encouraged development of responsible social relationships

Mini school C, in 2003 West From the basis of very close well developed homegroup structures, where teachers progressed with their group, mini school C aimed to provide a secure, friendly, working environment in which each person was encouraged to reach their potential. Great emphasis was placed on the development of respect and critical awareness.

Mini school D, formerly South, in 2003 Senior Was a heterogeneous group of teachers who worked for friendly and happy relationships with students using a variety of teaching styles. Teachers aimed to develop basic skills and provided a wide range of intellectual and manual pursuits. Every effort was made to foster enjoyment and interest in students’ work.

Changes to Mini School Structure

The mini school system changed in the early to

mid 1980’s to that of a predominantly pastoral care role concentrating on student welfare, discipline and learning, as changes to teachers’ career structures occurred. This meant that mini school leaders could no longer be elected; teachers who held responsibility positions gained by merit filled these roles. In addition, the reintroduction of centrally mandated core curriculum frameworks, a forerunner to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), facilitated the merging of mini school philosophies to a single, whole school approach. The introduction of year 12 at the school in the mid 1980s led to the creation of a years 11 and 12 senior mini school, known first as South and from 1993 as Senior. Its aim was to foster an “adult” learning environment by giving students greater responsibility and by being more flexible towards welfare and discipline issues. South became an additional years 7 to 10 mini school.

The School Matures

Night classes were introduced to the public in 1976. In that year, students took part in a community programme where they built a chair and playground equipment for disabled children. There were also units on Social Work Investigations and other community projects. A scale model of a fully-furnished house was built for Fire Prevention week demonstrating various faults that cause houses to burn.

The beginning of multi-marathons was seen in 1977 with the first Cook-a-thon / Dance-a-thon / Sit-a-thon over a twenty-four hour period. Students also took part in a sixteen-kilometre walk through the Dandenong Ranges in 1979 to raise money for charity and the school. Committees of students were formed to decide where the funds were to be placed.

In 1983, Mrs. Prue Hewitt, who was Senior Mistress, took over as Principal from Mr Ken Baldwin, who retired.

Slowly the school grew to fruition, with the construction of the Gym/Music/Drama complex, completed in 1987, plus a new Library and Auto area. All of this was a long, long way from the beautiful grounds that the school now exhibits. The building upgrade allowed the school to restructure its curriculum, which became centralised, and to change its “technical” image to that of a comprehensive secondary school.

The mini school structure was maintained but

Schools

rearranged into three junior, years 7 - 10 schools and one senior, year 11 and 12 school.

The school changed its name to Boronia Heights Secondary College in 1990 in response to the Education Department's structural reforms, which amalgamated high and technical schools. The mini school system was adapted to incorporate these structural changes to enable the school to offer a comprehensive curriculum at all year levels. In 2003, the College maintains this system and is one of only a few schools in Victoria operating based on this model of mini schools.

West mini-School continued the multi-marathon tradition in 1990 with its Dance-a-thon, Games-a-thon, Wake-a-thon, Silence-a-thon to raise money for equipment for the Mini school. Other Mini schools also held various fund-raising efforts throughout the year.

Community awareness of Environmental issues became of major concern to students in 1990 and their thoughts and work were brought to community attention. Various charities have received small amounts of money through the efforts of Boronia Heights students.

In 1991, the school increased its offering of electives, still attempting to meet the individual needs and requirements of students. Society is in the technological age and many of the electives were designed with this in mind.

In 1993, Arthur Nilsson, took over as Principal from Mrs Prue Hewitt.

A major refurbishment in 1996 saw the building of a new science complex and 3 new multi-purpose tennis/netball courts adjacent to the gymnasium. In addition, the library was extended to include a senior study area.

In the later half of the 1990's, provision of learning technologies was substantially increased. The senior school gained 3 fully networked computer rooms, the library gained a full class set of networked computers and one room in each junior school gained 12 computers.

In 2000, Gray Ryan took over as Principal from Arthur Nilsson.

Boronia Heights Secondary College became Boronia Heights College in January 2002.

In 2002, 2 new general purpose classrooms were created out of an old sheet metal room and adjoining storeroom. A substantial maintenance grant was also provided for painting and flooring of the school.

In September 1976, Anthony Lamb (later to become a State member of Parliament) conducted a survey of the parents and students to find out whether Boronia Technical School served the needs of the community. His findings from the survey included the following:

"The high degree of satisfaction with the school held by parents and particularly by the students indicates that the mini school approach offers a wide range of philosophies which caters for the local population which desires a technical education ... Boronia Technical School is making a contribution ... by providing a form of comprehensive schooling which ... will provide a departure point for further education and employment which is acceptable to the general community it serves".

Boronia Heights College still maintains these attributes to this day. From its muddy, unfinished, yet auspicious beginning, Boronia Heights College has grown into a school of which the wider community and its students can be proud.

St. Bernadette's RC School

St. Bernadette's Primary School is located in Mountain Highway, The Basin. The School site consists of six acres of land purchased from Mr Forecast for \$46,000 in 1974. Mr Forecast was well known in the district as a ham radio operator. The land included a residence that was demolished prior to building the School. The site was chosen because it was the only land available in the area of a suitable size. The site was intended to be used primarily as a school site, but consideration was also given to building a parish centre.

Planning for the organisation of a primary school commenced in 1982 with the appointment of a Principal and staff and inaugural meetings of staff and parents. In 1983 the school commenced operation, with classes Prep to Grade 6, in the grounds of St. Joseph's School, Boronia, using portable classrooms and "spare rooms" at the back of St. Joseph's Church.

There were approximately 116 children enrolled in the first year under the guidance of Father John Cross, Principal Sr Frances Henderson and staff Felicity Weeks, Maria McIntyre, Gerry Lane, Sandra Dyck, Sue Gearon, Liz Murray, Thelma Dawson, Mary Stapleton and Maria Phieler.

The school buildings at The Basin were completed and opened in September 1983. Enrolment grew to 335 in 1992, and by then the school was well established with a range of up to date facili-

ties including a gymnasium, computerised library, and playground equipment. In addition, the school offered music tuition and participated in local basketball competitions and a variety of community oriented activities.

In 1997, a major new addition to the school buildings was completed in the form of St. Bernadette's Community Hall. Sunday 6th April, 1997 was the official opening with a public open mass at 11.00 followed by an official ribbon cutting ceremony.

The hall is fully carpeted with a seating capacity of about 350, raised presentation platform, foyer, public address system, projector screen, kitchen and off-street parking. To assist in raising money for the purchase of chairs for the hall, an active fundraising committee used the idea of "sponsoring a chair". Donations towards the purchase of a chair were acknowledged on a small plaque on the back of the chair.

The school shares resources and ideas with Boronia Heights College, child care centres, and The Basin Community House. The school buildings have been used as a polling centre for several State and Federal elections. Over the years, the school has been involved in fund raising events for William Angliss Hospital and Legacy and have participated in Anzac Day ceremonies and the Town Crier competition.

The school has become, in very short time, a valuable addition to the older educational and social institutions in The Basin.

Kindergartens

The Basin Pre-School Kindergarten

In April 1956, The Basin Progress Association called a public meeting with the view to the establishment of a kindergarten. A well-attended meeting thereupon elected a committee, with Mrs. Fergus Chandler as President, and Mrs. R. Gair as Secretary. Committee members included Mesdames Turner, Petrie, Shanks, and Spry and Messrs. Wallace, Petrie and Chandler.

In October 1956, a play centre was opened in temporary quarters at The Basin Progress Hall, under the leadership of Mrs. Petty. The following year Miss West, a trained play leader, was appointed, and this entitled the committee to a Government subsidy. The committee was enlarged by the inclusion of Mrs. Tweedale, Mrs. Sadler, Mrs.

Shirley Brewer, Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Noone, Mrs. Thilby, Miss Marshall, and Mrs. McKinnon.

The need for a permanent building was evident and the appropriate site seemed to be the land adjacent to the Health Centre in Forest Road, which had been donated by Mr. W. J. Wallis to the Council for such a purpose. An application to the Council for the concept of a Kindergarten was successful and plans were drawn up by Messrs. Wallace, Chandler, and Petrie. A sustained fund raising effort followed and by October 1957 sufficient funds were in hand to entitle the committee to a capital grant of 2,275 pounds. Ferntree Gully Council added 100. A tender from Mr. Brian Foster was accepted and the kindergarten was completed in June 1958, for a cost of 3,700 pounds including 500 pounds for equipment.

The charming and modern building was opened by Sir George Knox on the 13 September 1958. Mrs. Chandler and her Committee were congratulated by the director of Maternal & Infant Welfare Dr. Meredith on their achievement of completing their goal in 2 ½ years - one of the most rapidly built kindergartens in Victoria.

In the next 3 years, during which Cr. Guy Turner acted as Treasurer, the kindergarten was freed of debt, partly due to an increased subsidy, upon the appointment of a fully qualified kindergarten teacher Mrs. LeRoy.

Since the Kindergarten was completed and operation begun, there have seen some changes in structure. An office has been constructed at the front of the building and a "multi-purpose" room was put onto the rear of the building. This room is used with the children, for meetings and parent get-togethers.

In 1967, the Shire of Knox allocated a portion of land at the rear of the Kindergarten to be used as a playground. The land had originally been leased to the Basin Scout Group. Reconstruction of the playground was planned and carried out in 1987, largely through the efforts of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Henry and an enthusiastic band of parents. A storage shed for outdoor equipment, pathways and ramps from the rear of the building were acquired and financed largely through the efforts of the then local Ward Councillor, Mr. Peter Maley, from Knox Council grants.

For many years, the Kindergarten was fortunate in having Mrs. Esther Bird come regularly to

Kindergartens

play the piano. This has given the children attending a wide range of musical activities to enjoy.

The Office of Pre-School and Child Care and more locally the City of Knox, take responsibility for major maintenance and administration of the Kindergarten. Annually elected Management Committees are given the task of everyday running and upkeep. Largely due to these groups there has been a smooth running of internal matters over the years.

Fundraising Committees have been enthusiastic over the years in their efforts to raise extra funds to purchase new, and update old equipment, for the use and benefit of the children attending. In recent years they have run most successful fairs raising money for this purpose. Some of the major leaders of these Committees have been Mr. Randall Robinson, Mr. Stan Ellison, Mr. Peter Maley, Mr. Bill McCallum, Mr. Gordon Wright and Mrs. Val Henry.

The Kindergarten does have some financial assistance in the form of a maintenance grant from State Government funds. This is passed on to the committee through the City of Knox. The major financial burden of running the Pre-School is left up to the Centre. Monies are raised through fees paid by parents and fund raising efforts held throughout the year.

Over the years the population of The Basin grew to a point where the Kinder started a third group of children; these children attended twice a week bringing the full enrolment to 72. Due to the fact that two new kindergartens were built in the approximate area, these numbers dwindled and in 1990 this third group ceased to operate.

In 1990, Knox Council resolved to rezone land in Church Street on The Triangle as a potential site for a new Pre-School and to sell the site and building in Forest Road. The decision was based on safety issues, design inadequacies and the cost of redeveloping the existing building.

In 1993, a detailed Council assessment of the Pre-School revealed that enrolments had declined since 1990, projected enrolments predicted decline, the building had many design inadequacies and the estimated cost for alterations to meet required standards would be \$180,000. Council recommended that the Kindergarten be closed and the children be relocated to other Kindergartens. Reduced State Government funding for Kinder-

gartens also contributed to the Council rationalising Kindergartens in the City of Knox.

On hearing of this decision, the Pre-School committee began an intensive campaign of lobbying Councillors, consulting with community members, public protests, press lobbying and arranging public meetings. One public meeting was attended by over 150 people. Community response was overwhelming. Two Pre-School committee members were prominent in the fight to retain The Basin Pre-School - Ann Stevens and Elizabeth Clissold.

After extensive negotiations with Council, an agreement was reached whereby the Pre-School could remain open if the required renovations could be arranged with the assistance of the local community. Council agreed to assist by partly funding the renovations.

Over the Christmas period of 1993, a team of volunteers lead by local builder Malcolm Stevens, completed the required renovations at a cost of \$15,000. Community support was overwhelming with labour, material and monetary donations. Term 1 1994, saw the Pre-School open for one group of 30 children.

During 1994 and 1995, Council further enhanced the building with the addition of a pergola and the removal of a concrete driveway.

The Kinder now have groups of three year old children attending the recently formed Basin 3-year-old Playgroup. This group has been formed as a separate body to the Kindergarten; both groups working closely to provide a worthwhile facility. It now means that the Centre is used by children to its utmost during the week.

Some of the longer serving members of staff have been Mrs. Norma Batty and Mrs. Jan Barge (Assistants), Mrs. Judy Ledger (Part-time Teacher).

In 1998, Mrs. Vida Kesting was presented with a gold watch in recognition of her 25 years of service as the Director of The Basin Pre-School. In this role she has played a significant part in the lives of many children living in the area. Vida has had an excellent liaison with parents, and over the years has shown her dedication through attendance at working bees, social and fundraising functions organised by the various Committees. The countless children and parents who regularly return to the Pre-school to say

“hello” is testimony of the deep affection felt for Vida.

It is felt that the major achievement of the Kindergarten has been the ability to offer to the pre-schoolers of the area a happy place to spend the year prior to their schooling. It has also given the parents support when needed.

The Basin has a well-equipped Centre due to the efforts of the local community and it is hoped that this will continue well into the future.

The Goodwin Estate Kindergarten

During 1978, parents at St. Mary's Playgroup (The Basin) discovered that a number of The Basin children would miss out on a place in Kindergarten due to an insufficient number of places available in nearby Kindergartens.

A public meeting was arranged for 12 December, 1978. Forty parents attended the meeting and elected a committee of 13. The Committee was to approach council to try and get a new kindergarten built. The Committee was christened “The Interim Committee for The New Basin Kindergarten.” It was decided to set up a 4 Year Old Playgroup (with teacher) in St. Mary's Hall (located on Mountain Highway next door to the Service Station) for 1979.

The Committee found that many alterations were required to St. Mary's Hall to run a 4 Year Old Playgroup. Also, of the original 58 Knox children who had missed a kindergarten placing, approximately 35 children found placement in other areas, particularly Heathmont and Croydon. Therefore, whilst there was still a definite need for another kindergarten, the plan for the 4 Year Old Playgroup was dropped.

Council support for the new kindergarten was given during January 1979. By February, a plan for the new kindergarten was viewed by the committee and the position had been decided as council had acquired the land between Stuart Street and Rome Beauty Avenue during January. The Committee was told they would need to raise \$3000.00. They were very busy running a wide range of activities including - Cake Stalls, Raffles, Auctions, Lolly drives, restaurant nights and Lamington Drives. The Lamington drive proved to be a lot of work as the committee decided to make these themselves, in two working bees. They took orders for 2298 lamingtons. As midnight neared on the night before delivery day, the workers panicked as they ran out of fresh coco-

nut, until a bright spark came up with the idea to wash, dry and re-use the left-over coconut. The idea worked, and orders were delivered on time!

2,000 leaflets were delivered into letter boxes in the area to inform the public of their fundraising activities in order to establish a new kindergarten. This generated funds in the form of donations, especially one from The Basin Kindergarten for \$750.00.

Until May 1979, the kindergarten was referred to as “The New Basin Kindergarten”. It was renamed “The Goodwin Estate Kindergarten” in May after the original owner of the land of the nearby housing estate. One hiccup in the building of the kindergarten was a dispute about the roads. Originally the council planned to extend Stuart Street to join Rome Beauty Avenue, making a through road. However, after petitions, and meetings of local residents, the situation was resolved. The road was left blocked, making space for car parking, and the building of the kindergarten could commence.

Building was started around July 1979, by construction engineers “Paynter & Dixon”. The kindergarten plan included a playroom, which was one of the first in Knox. The total cost of the Kindergarten, including land, road works, car park etc., came to \$143,000, made up from \$100,000 council contribution, \$30,000 of Government grant and an interest free loan from council for \$15,000. The Committee's fundraising was to equip the new kindergarten.

In November 1979, Alan Angwin was appointed Director and Margaret Sedlins Assistant (Dec/Jan). Forty-eight children began at the Kindergarten in February 1980.

The official opening was on Saturday 29 March 1980. Children participated in the opening ceremony by cutting the ribbon. The Mayor, Hurtle Lupton, unveiled a plaque declaring the Kindergarten open.

The early establishment of the Goodwin Estate Kindergarten demonstrated the community spirit and commitment of The Basin residents (several of the original establishment committee had pre-school age children who were zoned for The Basin and Alchester kindergartens). Their concern for the young children in their community ensured a facility was provided for future children and families.

Up to 2002, over 1500 children have attended

The Basin Infant Welfare Centre

Health Centre

Sister Ann Peters, Sister in Charge of The Basin Infant Welfare Centre for over 15 years, recalls how keen some mothers were in ensuring their children attended the Centre.

Around 1980, a mother who lived in Golden Grove in The Ravine walked to the Centre and back with her young children. Apparently, she was an epileptic and could not drive.

A few years later, another mother who lived in Alpine Road (up Mountain Highway towards Sassafras), walked from there down to Claremont Avenue and caught the bus to the Centre.

the Goodwin Estate Kindergarten. There have been three full time Directors, Alan Angwin who resigned at the end of 1987, Helen Stanley, who resigned in July 2002 and Kerryn Rule who commenced on 15th July 2002.

The Goodwin Estate Kindergarten also ran a part-time group (four year old group) from 1981-1988 and a shared group with Colchester Park Kindergarten in 1989 and 1990. The Directors of these groups have been Robyn Jenes (1981, 1982), Geraldine Hill (1983-1987), Deborah Moore (1988), Wendy Herbstreit (1989) and Di Todd (1990). There also have been a number of Assistants namely Margaret Sedlins, Lisa Matthews, Estelle Tudor and Yvonne Pretty.

In 1997, the kinder established a private 3 year old group by forming the Goodwin Estate Pre-kinder. The group commenced with Kerryn Rule as their teacher with eight children. By July, the numbers had increased to allow the employment of an assistant, Denise Kelly, who in 2002 held this post. The group has an independent committee of management responsible for funding staff salaries and operational costs. In July 2002, Jenny de Kretser took up the Pre-kinder teaching post as a result of Kerryn Rule becoming the full time Pre-school Director.

The Basin community have continued to support the kindergarten and local traders have always been generous in donating goods for fundraising.

The Basin Fire Brigade have annually supported the kindergarten by providing a Santa on a Fire Truck to join in Christmas celebrations with the children. The community link between the Fire Brigade and the kindergarten was extended

in 1991 with the children performing at The Basin Carols By Candlelight.

In 1990, a local resident Peter McErlain wrote a song for the children to perform at the Carols. The evening was notable because the carols were unable to take place due to a heavy storm. However, in 1991 the children were able to sing "The Basin Bells" and the stage was crowded with a contingent of 1990 and 1991 children. Also, in 1991 the children sang "their" song at the City of Knox Carols at the Arboretum.

Since 1989, the kindergarten has held an annual Dinner Dance. In the early years, its format was in the form of a "Bush Dance" which grew in attendance to over 300 people. As well as being a financial success this dinner dance is an event which is looked forward to by the local community.

During 1993, the children of the kinder performed at the Radisson President Hotel with children from the Rowville Kindergarten. They performed a song and movement routine developed by Helen Stanley and supported by the creative talents of her committee. This "production" provided a stirring opening for the annual "KinderEd Conference", for educators across the state.

The building has remained well cared for and since its original construction has seen some improvements with a large pergola added and plans for a verandah and rotunda to enhance space for children's learning and play in shaded areas.

The kinder is well known for its "inclusive" approach to education and over the years many children with "additional needs" and disabilities have accessed the programme. The centre philosophy strives to support children and families with additional needs by actively funding additional assistants to work with individual children regardless of government funding. Where funding is not provided or is inadequate, the kinder community fundraise to ensure each child is given the same opportunity as his or her peers. The continued strength of the kindergarten lies in the strong community focus that exists within the Basin community. The

The Basin Infant Welfare Centre

On the 11 June 1944, at a meeting in The Basin Progress Hall, a decision was made to establish an Infant Welfare Centre in The Basin. Elected President was Mrs. Bert Chandler and Mrs. Hugh

The Basin Infant Welfare Centre

Chandler was Hon. Secretary. Committee members included Messrs Earney, Clark, Turner, Harris, Stevens, Puddy, Battersby, Wright and Freeman. In a room at The Progress Hall voluntarily lined by Mr. Freeman, a temporary hall was established. This was officially opened by Dr. Doris Officer on 14 October 1944. Sister Lipscombe was in attendance at the Centre for half a day a week.

In 1945 land in Forest Road was generously donated by Mr. W. J. Wallis and this inspired the Committee to raise funds for a permanent building, the plans of which were drawn by Mr. L. R. Henley. Fund raising in those days was difficult and it wasn't until 1952 when the Government granted 1,000 pounds that it was possible to start building. These years had seen Mrs. Earney as President, Mrs. West as Secretary and Mrs. Greenwell as Treasurer. By 1953 it was necessary to revise plans to meet new Health Regulations and Mr. Westly of Ferntree Gully Shire assisted greatly in this regard.

The Shire added to the fund and it was then possible to accept a tender, from Cowin Bros. of Boronia, to build a modern brick centre, fully fitted and tastefully furnished. To the Committee's credit the Centre opened free of debt.

On 11 February 1956, the Centre was officially opened by Dr. Doris Officer; the culmination of twelve years planning and local effort.

Knox Shire Council took over responsibility for the maintenance of the centre and for the attendance of a qualified sister for a full day weekly. This was Sister Shirley Pask who was followed by Sister Margery Eve.

In 1975 it was proposed to introduce Playgroups. Playgroups are run by parents and allow groups of children too young for Pre-School Kindergarten to come together and "play". At the time one committee was responsible for running both the Infant Welfare Centre and the Pre-School and would not permit Playgroups. The Council allowed the Infant Welfare Centre to form its own committee to control the upkeep of the Centre. This committee initiated the commencement of Playgroups.

In 1976 Toddler Groups were introduced in Knox as a pilot scheme. Toddler Groups are identical in concept to Playgroups but are organised as part of the Centre and teachers are funded by the Council. An extension to accommodate the chil-

dren and a storeroom for the equipment to be used was constructed. As part of the extension, hot water was reticulated throughout the Centre. Prior to this, the Centre had no hot water on tap. In July 1976, Toddler Groups commenced. Christine Bowan was the Toddler Group teacher.

In September 1976 Sister Ann Peters took over as Sister in charge from Margery Eve. Ann remained as Sister in charge until June 1992.

Due to lack of a teacher, Toddler Groups ceased in December 1990. This was a great loss to the area. At that time Playgroups organised by the parents were still running. The original Playgroup that commenced at the Centre and later moved to St. Mary's Church (now the site of a Hindu Temple) disbanded in 1991. Another great loss to The Basin.

The Basin Infant Welfare Centre has had a changing face over the years. From the beginning it has been a meeting place for families, some of which were very isolated. The introduction of First Mother Groups around 1975 was the beginning of many friendships. Some of these families are still friends. The Centre now has children attending whose parents attended the Centre as children.

In 1976, many of the streets in The Basin were unmade and many a time whilst doing home visits Sister Peters car became bogged and required towing. With the sealing of most roads home visits became pleasurable.

Over the years, the infant population of The Basin has not been high enough to keep the Centre open for more than four days a week. In 1990, it dropped to three days a week.

Originally the Centre was known as "The Basin Baby Health Centre" and later with the correct title of Infant Welfare Centre. About 1986, it became known as "The Basin Maternal & Child Health Centre".

In 1990, Knox Council announced plans to build a new Centre on The Triangle, off Church Street. The proposed new building would contain both the Pre-School Kindergarten and the Maternal & Child Health Centre, but with separate facilities. However, due to lack of enrollments and funds the plan was never realised.

Special mention must be made of the dedication to the Centre given by Sister Ann Peters over the seventeen years that she was Sister in Charge. She has become well known in the local commu-

Sources of Information

nity as a caring person genuinely interested in the task to which she is committed.

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- “Fire on the Hill, Flowers on the Valley” - Rick Coxhill.
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- The Basin Primary School Centenary Booklet - 1980
- Current and former residents. In particular, Jim and Barbara Stephens for general help and information.
- Boronia Heights College 30 year reunion booklet for College history.

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