



NSW,  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
EDUCATION  
AND  
TRAINING

# Wyong Public School History 1888 - 2013

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## THE LATE NINETEENTH (19<sup>th</sup>) CENTURY 1887

### EARLY WYONG AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL IN 1888

The township of **Wyong**, on the Central Coast of New South Wales, came into being in 1887. Less than one hundred years after European settlement in Australia (1878), there was a village of 7 to 8 houses in Wyong on the traditional lands of the **Darkinjung people**. The colonial government made grants of this land to selected people, such as **Charles Alison** as the local Aboriginal people had lost their rights to land. Many Aboriginal people in the region died as a result of introduced diseases such as smallpox.

From 1887 to 1889 the Sydney to Newcastle railway line was completed. Trains came to Wyong in 1887, but the linking bridge across the Hawkesbury River was not completed until 1889. The railway station and the township were established on Charles Alison's land. It was Mr Alison who wrote a short note to **The Department of Public Instruction** in December 1887 seeking an application form for the establishment of a school. His estate manager Joseph Ranken organised the filling in of the form by the parents. At this time, it was very rare for the Department to plan and establish schools.

The completed application form was dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1888. It was sent to the local Member of Parliament the Hon. Richard Stevenson. Mr Ranken wrote a cover note explaining that the form:

*"Signed by the parents of children living about here whose children are unable to attend through the long distance and bad roads, any other school. As our Respected Member in parliament we trust you will bring this before the Minister for Public Instruction at once as our boys and girls is going Wild for want of a public school about here.*

*We have got forty (40) names on the Rool but there will be a lot more Children coming here shortly as the Fishermen of Lake Tuggerah are bringing their families here to live. Their houses are going up now.*

*You sir know yourself how our population is increasing within the last six months and you will be able to point out to the Minister that the school is wanted at once.*

*Mr Alison has offered the land to the department to build a school on or will Build them a place himself and rent if the department wishes (so there is no excuse)."*

The application form contained the names of 40 children who would attend the school, although a few were only two or three years old. Some children were attending Kangy Angy School (opened in 1878), but as the letter indicated, it was some distance from Wyong (3.5 miles) and the tracks through the scrub were impassable in wet weather.

The next nearest school was Wyong Creek, known as Wyong Creek Lower (opened 1883). Some of the parents had farms of their own, while others were Alison's tenants. Two of the men taking responsibility for the establishment of the school, William Fishburn and James Scanlan, were railway gangers, while Robert Izzard was an innkeeper.

In accordance with the usual practice, the department sent the local inspector, William McIntyre, to examine the situation at Wyong and to see whether a school was needed. His report written June 5<sup>th</sup> 1888 read:

*Wyong is a new and promising township on the Northern Railway, about 63 miles (95km) from Sydney and 40 from Newcastle. It has a railway station. The district is rich in coal, timber and fish; and a large population is likely to settle in the locality. There are two saw mills, about 30 fishermen, and a coal mine is likely to be opened. Within two miles, there are 20 families, and about 40 educable children. The average will be about 26 to begin with, sufficient for a 9<sup>th</sup> class school.*

Since an average of only 20 pupils was required for a Public School, McIntyre had no hesitation in recommending that the application be granted. It would also be possible to open the school almost immediately in temporary premises.

Mr Ranken offered (on Alison's behalf) to rent the Department a building for five shillings (50 cents) a week. This building was **Watts Concert Hall** and it was used each month for Church of England (Anglican) services. It measured 24 feet (8 metres) by 18 (6 metres) and was in good condition. The necessary furniture, equipment and textbooks could be quickly obtained from a temporary railway camp school at Woy Woy, which had just closed (as the railway line was complete).

## WYONG PUBLIC SCHOOL OPENS

2<sup>nd</sup> July 1888

The Department accepted all McIntyre's recommendations, and moved with surprising speed to get the school opened. The first teacher, **Mr William BERRY**, was appointed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1888, and he opened Wyong Public School on **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1888**. This was the day schools resumed after the two week mid-winter vacation (in the old 3 term school year).



**Alexander William Berry (1863–1932)**

Alexander William Berry, the town's first schoolmaster, was a teacher in the Wyong area for about twenty-three years.

He had the distinction of being the first teacher ever to be appointed to the Wyong Creek School when it was opened in 1883; and the first teacher in charge of the Wyong Primary School when it was opened; and he was our first show president.

Berry was born at Waterloo in Sydney in 1863, his father being a mining engineer who had migrated from Yorkshire in England.

Later he lived at Hamilton and was educated at the school at Wickham.

While stationed at Wyong Creek in his younger years he would ride all the way to Hamilton and back over every second weekend on his horse called Diablo, a return journey of some one hundred miles, to visit his mother.

On June 28, 1889, he married a local lass, named Charlotte Bradley whose father was once a sawmillier at Brush Creek specialising in the cutting of fellies which were used in the making of wooden wheels of many kinds—for bullock waggons, sulkies, buggies, carts, etc.

The marriage took place at the St. Silas Church of England at Wyong Creek, which had been opened on March 24, 1886.

It was on the site of the home now occupied by Mr and Mrs John Gear at the apiary, but was removed from there nearly sixty years ago.

Berry was transferred from Wyong to Gladesville at the beginning of 1906.

After serving at Gladesville for about fourteen years he was (according to family records) appointed as the first headmaster at Cremorne, a Sydney suburb; and retired from there.

At Wyong he played regularly with the local cricket team, usually as opening batsman. In later life he played bowls regularly and was a member of the Ryde Bowling Club.

He died in 1932 and was cremated at Rookwood.

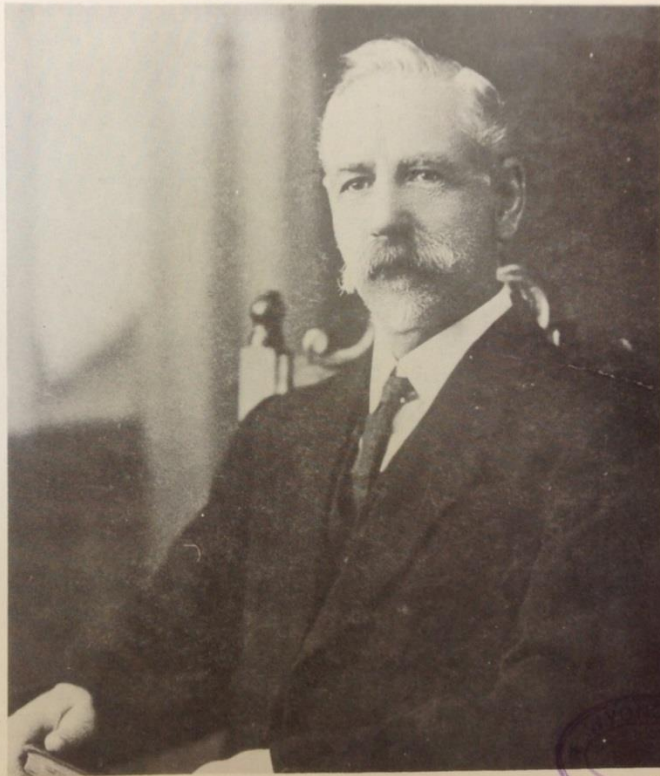


Photo: Mrs. D. Barnett, Wairoonga

Mr Berry began his career at the age of 19. His training was to observe lessons at a large Public School. He was the first teacher at Wyong Creek Lower School. He studied, sat examinations and was inspected to be classified as a teacher. He was highly regarded when he transferred to Wyong from Wyong Creek.

McIntyre selected a two acre school site on Alison's estate. It was situated on a reserve for public buildings, which Alison had set aside in drawing up the sub-division plan for Wyong Township. This was the standard school site size in the nineteenth century (C19th).

McIntyre also persuaded Mr Alison to allow a 200 feet (70 metre) frontage to the main road. This road is Alison Road, and the road to the side is Ranken Street.

The site was worth 300 pounds (\$600), but as McIntyre explained on 3<sup>rd</sup> July:

*Mr Alison is willing to give this land as a gift for school purposes, provided that his offer is accepted within one month, that the Department pay the cost of survey and erect school buildings thereon (value for 800 pounds or \$1,600) and McIntyre persuaded Mr Alison to extend the next condition from 6 months to within 9 months from acceptance of his offer (to build the school).*

This was a very generous offer on Alison's part. The site on the hill overlooked all of Wyong. He was also very clever in that schools were often temporary, and wooden. It was not uncommon for a year or two to pass while plans were drawn up, tenders called and

buildings erected. Funding could also be delayed. Alison's gift sped the process up; ensured Wyong School was built in brick, and opened in 1889. One hundred years later the gift of the land by Charles Alison halted plans to sell and re-develop the Alison Road site. It remains in public hands today for this reason.

## THE SCHOOL IN ALISON ROAD WYONG

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1889

The building of a brick building was expensive for the Department. McIntyre recommended a schoolroom to accommodate 80 pupils, plus a classroom for 40. He also recommended a brick teacher's residence of five rooms plus kitchen.

He based his recommendations on the bright future for Wyong. He noted the day before in the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, the formation of the Wallarah Coal Company was announced, and this mine was near Wyong on Alison's estate.

The Department's Chief Inspector Maynard was less generous. He deleted the classroom and reduced the schoolroom to accommodate 50. He did agree to the residence. The Department's architect drew up the plans. The schoolroom was 32 feet (11metre) by 18 (6 metre) with "sitting accommodation" for 60 pupils, "floor space" for 72 but "air space" for fewer than 60.

The plans went on view for tender in August 1888, but the local MP, Richard Stevenson wrote to complain the proposed building would not meet "*the rapidly growing requirements of the place*". McIntyre pointed out there were already 50 pupils enrolled, and the original plan was accepted.

Alison's deadline expired on 10th April, 1889. The Department had to quickly amend the plans and call tenders again. November 1888 the tender of the Sydney based company Louis Le Breton for a cost of 1,149 pounds (\$2,298) was accepted. This was not the lowest bid, but it promised completion in 5 months as opposed to 6 months.

April 16th 1889 the buildings were declared ready. **Berry moved the students in on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1889.** Alison's deadline had not been met, but he made no protest. He had his school.



Mr Berry was not married, and once the teacher's residence was built he would be replaced by a married man. In March 1889 he advised the Department that he had been anxious to marry for the past six months, but he could not do this as he had nowhere to live. He wanted to marry in the mid-winter vacation, and sought the Department's permission to marry then, and to also move into the completed residence so he could furnish it and prepare it for his new bride. McIntyre gave William Berry a glowing recommendation:

*Mr Berry is a very industrious and trustworthy teacher. He manages his school with much success and gives much satisfaction to the parents. He has arranged to marry a wife in the course of a few weeks, and I would now recommend that he be allowed to remain in his present position as teacher at Wyong and to occupy the new school premises. No teacher can keep up so good an average at Wyong as Mr Berry, because no teacher would take so much trouble.*

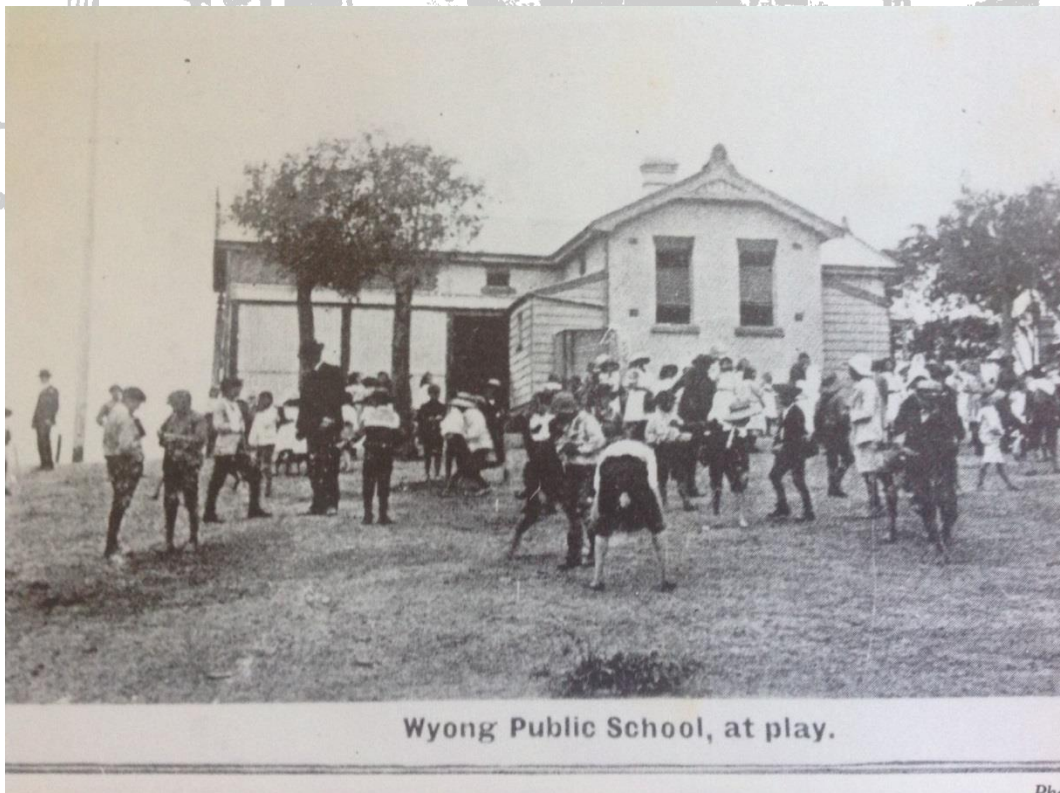
William Berry married Charlotte Bradley, a local girl, just after the start of the vacation. When school resumed Mrs Berry taught the girls sewing, and attended to their welfare. This enabled William to receive a full salary for the first time.

The new Alison Road site typified a New South Wales School in the C19<sup>th</sup>. (Nineteenth Century).





There was a commitment to an ideal of extending education, keeping children at school to at least sixth class. Government funding would decrease for at least 10 years from 1891 as there was a severe economic depression in Australia. In the 1890's teachers' salaries were cut, many schools were closed and class numbers grew.





The schoolroom was around 13 by 7 metres, and had two windows at each end, four windows along one long wall and two doors and a fireplace on the remaining wall.

Four rows of long desks and forms were screwed to the floor. Three of the rows were raised on broad steps so that the teacher could see every pupil without difficulty. There were two blocks of desks 4 metres long and one block 3.5 metres long. The layout and furnishing of such a room, **designed to accommodate 80 or more pupils with two teachers**, was a clear reflection of C19th approaches to education.

Children were expected to sit passively absorbing, largely by rote, the basics of the **3R's** (Reading, WRiting, ARithmetic) and quantities of elementary geography, European history and scripture. Whether they understood or enjoyed their learning was of little importance. Discipline was strict with a cane or ruler used as corporal punishment.

The smaller classroom at Wyong was designed for religious instruction by visiting clergy, and for withdrawing pupil groups for oral lessons or sewing. It had three very long forms on a stepped floor and could squeeze in 30 pupils. On the side of this room was a small wooden hat room, which was added later. On the other side there was a "lavatory" or washroom with four tin basins set in a bench. The toilets were at the back of the building, built over cesspits.

The playground was cleared and stumped, with "saplings growing here and there" to provide shade in future years. Later students planted the ironbark trees, and a retaining wall was built on the Alison Road frontage. In the 1990's this was replaced by a new block wall, and pedestrian ramp.

## PUPILS TRAINED TO BE TEACHERS

The average attendance was always lower than the enrolment figures. In 1892 the average attendance was 50, even though education was compulsory in theory from 1880. Nevertheless, the 1892 numbers allowed Mr Berry to have an assistant teacher.

**Florence Richter**, who lived at Wyong Creek, **became Wyong's first pupil teacher in June 1893**. She had just turned 14 and would teach all day, concentrating on the younger children, and either before or after school Mr Berry gave her instruction in the school subjects, and the art of teaching. She was subject to regular inspections, as was Berry, and she had to pass written examinations at the end of her four year apprenticeship. Miss Richter left the school when her family moved to Sydney in March 1895. For the next few years there were other pupil teachers.

In August 1897 Lilian Woodbury also from Wyong Creek became a pupil teacher aged nearly 16. She was there until 1902 and then her sister Olive took over until 1907. The girls were part of a small group who asked the local School Board (like a P&C Association) if they could

be taught French on a Saturday in the schoolroom. They were “desirous of improving our knowledge of the French language”. The Department refused because there was payment involved. The Board was successful in getting a weather shed erected at a cost of 40 pounds (\$80).

## A NEW CENTURY: THE TWENTIETH ( 20<sup>th</sup> ) Century

The town continued to grow. In 1901 a single lane traffic bridge was built across the Wyong River. The States of Australia had joined to become a Commonwealth (Federation: 1 January 1901). The new Australian Constitution did not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as citizens of Australia. Indigenous children found it difficult to gain an education.

School enrolments were 150 in 1905 and 200 the following year. A second pupil teacher Herbert Boggs was appointed in 1903.



Mr Berry was transferred to Gladesville Public and the new **Principal for 1906 was Mr John Filshie**. He was given an assistant teacher as well as the two pupil-teachers. The 1889 building no longer was large enough. In 1905 Inspector Lobban also noted the Warner Estate was being rapidly sold and settled. Land owned by the wealthy Albert Warner was mostly east of the railway station where his office buildings with turreted rooftops (built 1915) still stand today.

A new classroom and verandah were added to the main building. The verandah was enclosed as a hat room.

## P&C FORMED

John Filshie reported in May 1906 a meeting of parents decided to form a Parents' Committee. This is a very early example of such a body as Parents Unions had only just begun in Sydney schools in 1905. The Wyong parents offered to lop the tall trees in the playground, obviously the "saplings" left in 1888 had grown. They held over until a future meeting the question of celebrating Arbor Day and planting more trees. They also raised for the first time an issue which was to come up again and again at Wyong. This was the state of the playground, and in particular the problems caused by the school's location on the crest of a hill. A man was employed for a week with a horse and dray. His task was to shift rocks and soil to make the ground less uneven, to fill the holes near the gates and to cut down the "saplings".

The next plan for the school was more ambitious. It was to form three terraces between the school building and Alison Road. These timber retaining walls would prevent erosion and provide level grassed plots. While the plan was supported by Inspector Lobban, his superiors were unimpressed by the costs involved. They did however build extra toilets in 1906/7 and the cesspits were replaced by a pan system.

## A NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM

A feature of the new 1906 classroom was that it did not have a stepped floor. Lobban had criticised the old small classroom in both 1906 and 1907, asking that the gallery be levelled and dual desks installed. The room also needed to be enlarged and improvements were made in 1908 after Filshie complained that 65 pupils did not fit into the original 1889 classroom, that they often became ill and in October a child fainted.

So the 1906 room gained small size dual desks for the first class children. The 1889 room had the floor levelled and desks installed for the fourth class. The little room continued to have the old fashioned long desks and forms as the Department could not meet the State demands for dual desks.

It was not just the seating plan of rooms that was new. There was a new syllabus to be taught, and the school records show no complaints were made by school inspectors in the delivery of this.

Still by 1908 it was clear 200 children did not fit into the existing rooms. The size and layout of the rooms hindered the teaching of the "new education" system. The basic principle was that each teacher had a classroom and there was a maximum of 50 students per class. A new classroom on the western side of the building measuring 12 metres by 7 metres (36.5 feet x 21) furnished with seven rows of five dual desks was begun in 1908. This was completely inconsistent with class sizes of the "new system" as it allowed for 70 students



but it went ahead. The school was repainted and repaired and works on the residence were completed by 1910.

## 1911 HEALTH SCARE PANICS TOWN

Early last century **diphtheria** was a disease which often proved fatal, and the occurrence of it could easily panic a community. This happened in Wyong in 1911, with the school being the centre of attention. In 1910 the new principal (**James Burrell**)'s daughter contracted the disease, and twelve months later she fell ill with it again. In the meantime an assistant teacher at the school had been seriously ill with the disease, and then her successor contracted it as well. The final straw, in the eyes of the community, was the illness of the school cleaner's daughter, who had occasionally helped clean the school. Although the doctor was convinced that the school and residence were not the source of the infection, and that the house where both assistant teachers had boarded was probably the likely candidate, **most of the parents withdrew their children from the school**. The Shire Council called for the removal of the headmaster and for the Department to act on the school. On a Friday and Monday in August 1911 the school was closed for four days to allow cleaning, disinfecting and large quantities of sulphur was burnt in all the rooms.

Community relations improved when the Wyong Mutual Help Society was permitted by the Department to meet in the school once a week. In return, the society raised money to pay off the debt on the school piano, and by 1913 it was paid for. This society was more a literary, debating and musical organisation. It was still noted as meeting in the school in 1914.

## P&C TAKES ACTION

In 1913 the department received its first letter from the Wyong Parents and Citizens Association (P&C). It is not known whether the Parents Committee established in 1906 had remained in existence, simply changing its name, or whether this was a new body.

The P&C Secretary Mr Lyell Morris, raised two issues with the Department:

- The dangerously eroded playground
- The damp condition of the older parts of the school

Both complaints were followed up in this letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few weeks later.

Sir,

Kindly allow me a small space in your valuable journal to bring before the public's eyes a deplorable state of affairs that exists in our little town which is situated not many miles from the metropolis.

At a meeting of the Parents and Citizens' Association of the above school some very plain talking was indulged in, owing to the terrible state of the school ground and building. As one enters the ground, which is situated in the fall of a hill, it at once shows the fearful neglect on the part of the department, and I might also say the representative of the district. The gateways are in a deplorable state since the beginning of the rainfall; in fact they are almost impassable, and the association at once decided to have them attended to at their own expense rather than their children should take the risk of injury to body and limb. The ground itself is nearly as bad, and is not in any way suitable for a school playground; in fact it is like most public buildings built in the country in the past – that is, placed on the worst available spot.

The building, which is of brick, although having a fair outside appearance, is badly constructed and as soon as one enters your first thought goes to the teachers and children, rather than your condemnation to the department for allowing such a sad state of affairs. In the infants' room there are 60 pupils. Out of this number 25 were away with bad colds, and of the balance only 10 were not affected with the colds. This is due to the very unhealthy state of the building. The walls of the room are green with damp, and the must smell is scandalous. I cannot understand what the much-boasted Board of Health is doing to allow this, and no doubt they will rise to the occasion when the disease germs are sweeping the district with mortality. It seems incredible to think that living in this age of civilisation such a deplorable state of affairs should be allowed to exist.

I am (etc) signed A.R. Tuckett

Mr Tuckett's letter saw urgent repair work on the guttering in 1914, but most of the work was delayed because World War 1 began. Despite the war a drain was built across the playground in 1916, various areas were filled and gravel laid, and the fences and gates were repaired or renewed.

## WORLD WAR 1

1914 to 1918

The First World War had a great impact on schools. Australia was very patriotic in joining the British across the world. The Wyong Cenotaph was moved from Railway Square to the grounds of the school in the 1990's. The names of the fallen on this cenotaph show many of the ex-students of the school. One name, Ray Leslie Goldsmith (for example) died in 1914 age 20, and is buried at Anzac Beach Gallipoli. His cousin is also one who died in the war.

At school there were fundraisers and functions to support the war effort.



While the community mourned the loss of so many young men worse was to follow. All of **July 1919 the school was closed** and was turned into an emergency hospital for the victims of the **terrible influenza epidemic which followed the war. More people died across the world from this pandemic, (the Spanish flu) than in all of World War 1.**

Wyang suffered many deaths, particularly children, from the epidemic. Ten percent of male teachers had enlisted to go to war, and many died. This created a staff shortage and led to the re-employment of married women in a temporary capacity. (Once a woman married, she had to resign from teaching).

One such woman was **Margaret Quinn**, who had taught at Wyong as Margaret Fallon from 1909 to 1911. Margaret's husband had an accident and his leg was amputated. This made it difficult for him to work and support his wife and six young children. So although Margaret was employed as a temporary teacher in 1917, she continued teaching at Wyong until retirement in 1941. Mrs Quinn tried without success to become a permanent teacher. While discriminated against, Margaret was fortunate that she was not dismissed during the Depression years, as many women were, under the Married Women (Lecturers & Teachers Act) 1932.

Notable students include:



- Herb Bowcock, born January 1910 at Hope Street Wyong. His father Jim had a blacksmith and wheelright business on the corner of Hope Street and Alison Road
- Rawdon Henry (**Harry**) **McKinnon** student 1920-1925. Played first grade football, president of North Sydney Rugby League Club for 29 years. **Awarded a MBE** by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth 11 in 1971 for services to the state.
- Donald McKinnon a rugby league player with both Sydney and Newcastle clubs.
- **Tim Farrell**. A highly successful local businessman, longest serving Wyong Shire Councillor (1962-1974). Mayor 1975-1983. **Awarded a MBE** by the Queen for service to the community.

**In the meantime problems arising from the sloping site came up again and again.** At some point, the gift of this land by Charles Alison is questionable. The solution was to build retaining walls. The council had excavated Alison Road leaving the playground exposed and the fences falling down. The walls were built in 1923 and a picket fence installed. Next job was to renovate the school and residence. From 1927 to 1929 three P&C Secretaries (J.A. Hand, S. Cowled and M.G. Wilt tried to speed this up. Additions and repairs were completed by early 1930. The old schoolroom was modernised to make two classrooms, and the 1910 wing was extended. **Then in 1929 electricity was connected to the teacher's residence. The town also was connected but the department refused to connect the school itself.** In 1931 **town water** was connected to both the school and residence. Finally in 1933 the playground was terraced, using the council grading plant and roller which was supplied free of charge. **Principal Arthur Goodenough** reported in 1938 the terraces were eroding away, and he asked for trailing plants to stabilise the banks. He was allowed another teacher as enrolments were at 206. This brought the staff to five members.

**The P&C wanted to embrace technology, so they paid to connect the school to electricity and gave the school a wireless set to plug in to the new power source.** The year was 1938.

<b>WORLD WAR 2</b>	<b>1939 to 1945</b>
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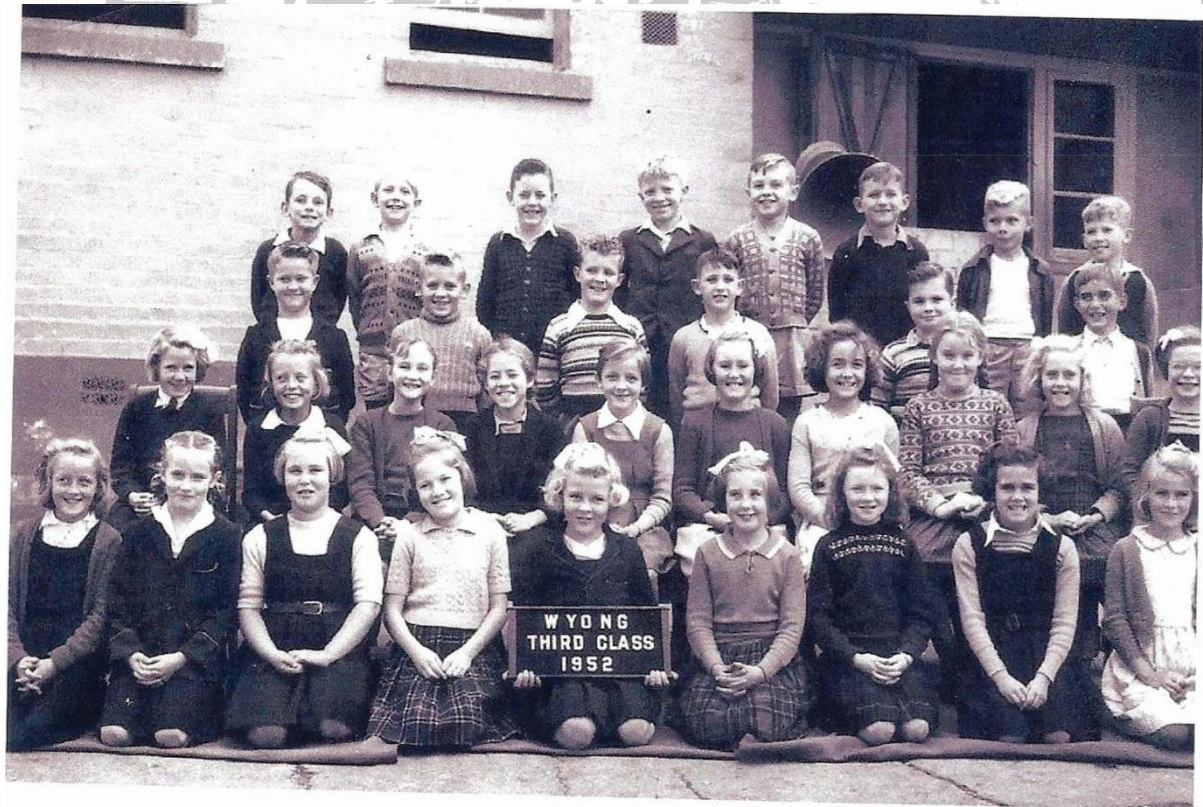
During the war years trenches were dug in the lower level playground (the new terrace), and pupils had air raid practice. On one whistle, the children had to proceed in an orderly manner and hide in the trenches. The ground was mostly clay, so in wet weather shoes and clothes were dirty. Two whistles meant all clear, and the children returned to class. Because the school is on a hill, wardens sat on the roof to spot for aircraft. The railway was heavily guarded and soldiers were camping at the showground/racecourse. **Principal Llewellyn Allen** worked hard to see the 7<sup>th</sup> class had a school, Wyong Central School. He oversaw the purchase of land in Alison Road (Chapman's Paddock) opposite the local Member of Parliament (Mr D'Arcy Rose's) home. He died of cancer on November 1, 1943. Fittingly his wife was invited to the official site dedication of Wyong Central (High) School on March 4, 1944. Wyong High's sports houses are **Allen**, Rose, Baker (after Gersh Baker, local dentist &

sportsman) and McKimm (a teacher from the valleys, who was president of the Wyong A&C which celebrated its centenary in 2013.)



In 1943 there were 33 secondary or 7<sup>th</sup> class students attending school. In 1944 this number rose to 136 students and they went down the road to their new school in 1946, with **Mr Roy Devine** as Principal. In 1950 the Central School became Wyong Junior High and then renamed Wyong High in 1952.







**In 1951 the sports houses were formed** and named after local Australian fauna, all common to Wyong: **Kookaburra, Wallaby, Platypus and Koala.**

Local icon Terry Wand was in 1<sup>st</sup> class in 1947. He remembers the school sports colours of brown and green, and Mr Paterson introducing inter-school sports: the boys played rugby league and the girls vigaro and basketball. With numbers growing, local schools formed the Wyong Shire Primary Sports Association, and each year the schools would march along the Pacific Highway from Railway Square to the Showground/Racecourse to compete in a huge sports carnival.

Around 1952 the school formed a band and the P&C purchased a kettle drum, while students bought their own recorders. To the beat of the kettle drum and recorders, the students would march to class. This continued until the early 1980's.

Notable students from this era include:

- Peter Spencer 6<sup>th</sup> class 1941. Worked at Britstand Engineering, cadet engineer 1947 then in 1952 entered family clothing and haberdashery business established by his father in 1923. Worked with Joy Cant (student in 1930's). Spencer's store is currently a restaurant on the Pacific Highway (near the Chemist)
- Stan Morris class of 1941 was presented with Mr Keith Saladine's cane as he had seen so much of it. Mr Saladine gave it to him as a memento.
- Kevin Deaves (Road Runner Coaches and Lions Club), Roy Ferguson (First Grade Western Suburbs), Dr Joan Levy, George Katsoulis (a chemist), Colin Bishop (a professional golfer), John Elder (teacher), John and Robert Davies (local automotive repairers and cranes), Errol Smith (news presenter) and Judge John Jones
- Max Levenspiel highly successful local businessman and property developer  
Max and Faye's children also attended the school. The completion of the Cutler Drive shopping precinct allowed for the road itself to be connected from east to west.
- Rodney Wicks, dux of Wyong High, local solicitor and President of Wyong Race Club
- Lyn, Jan, Ian and Peter Vaughan whose grandfather established Lakes Printers
- **1965 the school badge (in its current shape) was introduced after a competition to design it.**

#### **School Captains of the 1960's:-**

**1963** Gregory Wicks and Joanne Fernance

**1964** Ross Dunstan and Robyn Fernance

**1965** Geoffrey Corrigan and Maureen Lee

**1966** Tony Sonter and Anne Ives

- 1967 Peter Corrigan and Rosemary Clarke  
1968 Peter Mitchell and Jennifer Smith  
1969 Stephen Clarke and Genevieve Newton

## NORTH ROAD INFANTS DEPARTMENT

During the 1950's enrolments continued to grow. The two acre site in Alison Road could not be expanded, so a site of four and a half acres in North Road was resumed in 1953. Wooden demountable buildings were added to Alison Road, but in 1961 the decision was made to transfer the Infants School. A building containing six classrooms plus office, staffrooms and hat room was occupied in May 1963.

The building was officially opened by the Member for Wyong, Mr Ray Maher on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963.

The Infants department remained at this site until new classrooms were built at the Cutler Drive site after the primary department move there in 1979. The Infants site was represented by a Mothers Club. Before the Infants left the school site, the Wyong P&C wrote to the Minister for Education Mr Paul Landa on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1980. The concern expressed was that 818 Primary and Infants students were enrolled, and the maximum number the Cutler Drive site could hold with the completion of Stage 2 (Infants classrooms) was 630 students. The letter presented the following factors to support its questioning of demographic projections:

- The Sydney Newcastle expressway was due for completion 1984
- Electrification of the rail line to Wyong was due for completion that year
- The transport links would clearly lead to population growth
- Wyong Council had just released land in the new (now Watanobbi) estate
- The Housing Commission (now Dept. of Housing) was opening 30 homes within half a kilometre of the site and had plans for many more in the new estate

The letter was signed by the president of the P&C Mr Warwick Horner and was supported by the Mothers' Club president, Mrs Cherylynne Horner.

A deputation led by the P&C also met with the Minister regarding the pending overcrowding.

The temporary solution was to establish a new school to take the additional numbers. **The Infants School site was re-named Wyong Grove because of the stand of trees there**, and long-time resident Reg Atkins told us that **the last koalas in Wyong lived in those trees**. The other suggested name, North Road Public, was rejected by the Department. Wyong Grove opened in 1981. A library, canteen and in 2012 school hall

were all added to the site. The school is scheduled for closure at the end of 2013, with many of the students transferring to Wyong Public.

## THE NEW SCHOOL CUTLER DRIVE

SEPTEMBER 1979 & JANUARY 1981

Land in Cutler Drive was purchased and resumed in 1974-1975. It was lightly timbered and had been used to cut pit props for the mines in the past.

The decision was made that both Alison Road and North Road sites would close. The P&C held a farewell dinner on August 11th, 1979 and Mrs Lydia Downes and Mrs Julie Shatford (now Graham) were instrumental in a huge fundraising effort to equip the new school. It was a quantum leap from 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings to this state of the art school. Playgrounds and ovals had to be created.

**September 1979 the Primary department moved in.** To show how crowded it had been at the old site, a Year 3 class (taught by Mr Chris Swan) was using the Church in Ranken Street, and when a student fainted in the church, the teacher put water in the baptism font to cool his forehead.







The construction of the **Infant's** classrooms then began, and in **January 1981 they moved in.** **Wyong Public School had not been united since 1963.** From 2013 they will be re-united again.

The Cutler Drive site had a hall, and this allowed the staging of student productions. One such was **Paradise Island, an operetta performed by Year 6 in 1982.**

The cement tile roof of this hall had to be replaced as it leaked. Major re-building of the foyer and canteen areas occurred in 2011-12 as a result of Federal funding called Building the Education Revolution.

#### **School Captains of the 1970's:**

**1970** Phillip Smith and Anne Tindal

**1971** Robert Lowcock and Cynthia Cook

**1972** Bernard Nunn and Sharyn Guihot

**1975** Adrian Adam and Sue Humphreys

**1976** Peter Jamieson and Wendy Fernance

**1977** Wayne Fernance and Lyn Smith

**1978** Stephen Wassall and Cathy Adam

**1979** Bryce Graham and Margo Levenspiel

The past 25 years, following the school centenary, has seen a **revolution in information technologies**. Computer rooms presented challenges of maintaining quality equipment, networking and internet connections. A computer room was established in 1988 and by 1991 there were 15 Apple computers. The Apple Company had formed in a Californian garage in 1976 and began the sale of an experimental personal computer, Apple 1. The school library had 11,000 books in 1991. Personal computers became popular, and in 2013 I-Pads connected to Wi-Fi were in wide use.

In 1979 colour television was becoming more widely used. Recorded information was on reel to reel tapes for both audio and visual. The 2013 classroom has flatscreen monitors, with the tape, then cassette, then DVD all being superseded by internet downloads.

The chalk blackboard (painted green from the 1980's for better vision), was replaced by whiteboards and felt tipped pens. In 2013 the rooms now have interactive whiteboards using internet downloads and projection technologies. Students continue to hand write some of their work.

An Opportunity Class (OC) was established at Wyong to cater for Gifted and Talented Students across the region.

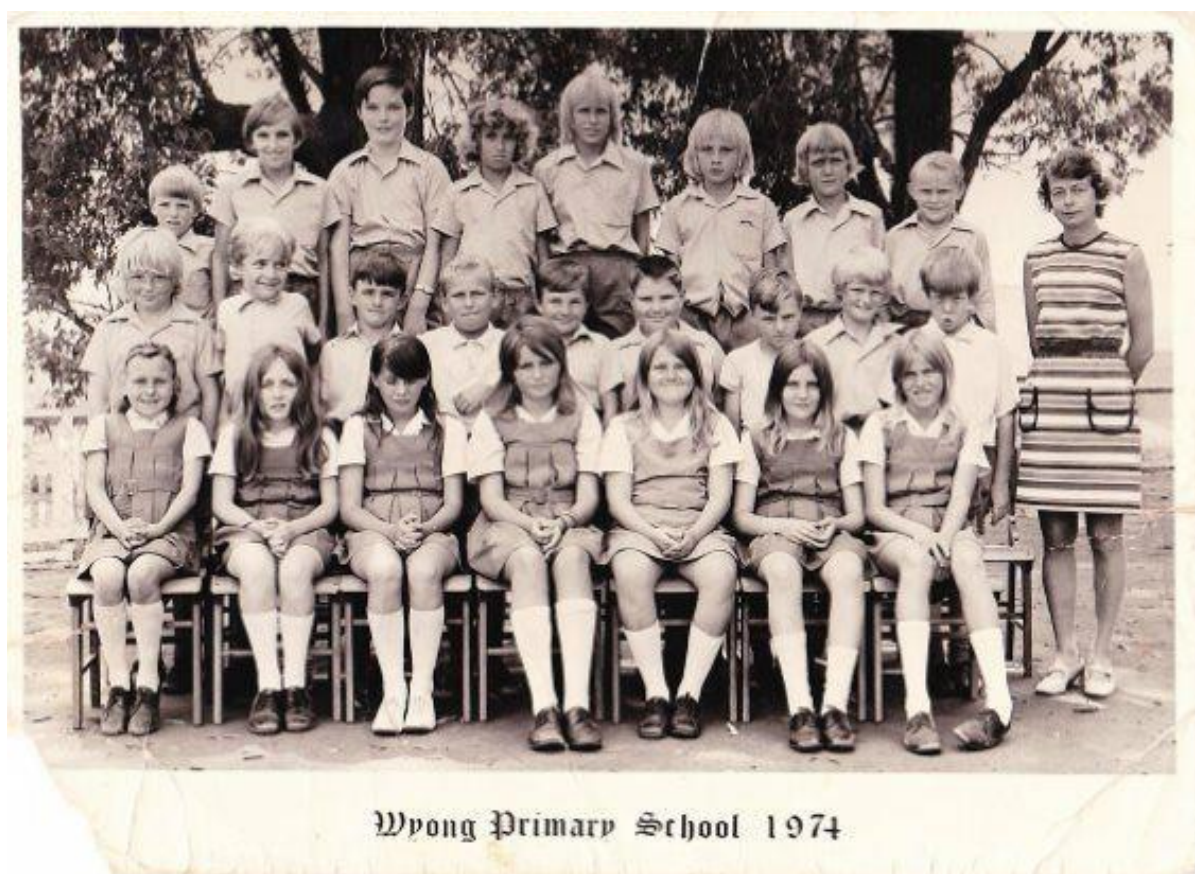
## SCHOOL UNIFORMS

In the late 1940's and 1950's there is some evidence of a girls' uniform which was a blue serge tunic with three box pleats at the front. It was worn with a white shirt and tie underneath. This was replaced by a grey box pleat tunic which was worn in the winter months. The summer tunic had a grey and white check, and the boys wore grey shorts with a blue shirt. From 1978 the girls' uniform was changed to a Princess style dress with short sleeves. It had a Peter Pan collar with a short feature tie coming from under the collar. The material was a green and white check with a god line running through the check. The boys wore a pale green shirt with grey shorts and socks. Their sports uniform was a gold T-shirt and green shorts, while the girls wore a gold T-shirt with a green wrap-around skirt. The current school uniform was introduced in 2005. It is predominantly green with a gold school badge on the front with gold stripes around the collar. **The school motto was changed from Truth and Loyalty to Personal Best.**









### The school has also survived 21<sup>st</sup> century disasters

In June 2007 the Central Coast was subjected to a weather event which saw unprecedented rainfall. The subsequent flooding cut all roads, and pushed Tuggerah Lakes into flooding not experienced since the 1950's.

The school was badly flooded, and then the high winds brought down trees which demolished the COLA (Covered Outdoor Learning Area) in the assembly area. Repairs would be over \$2 million. Students' homes were also badly damaged along with infrastructure such as power supply. This was a traumatic time for everyone, and due to the widespread nature of damage, the repair process took over a year for the community to rebuild.

### THE HEADMASTERS (PRINCIPALS)

Teacher	Date Appointed
William BERRY	28 June 1888
John FILSHIE	29 January 1906
James BURRELL	29 December 1909
George LING	March 1913

Thomas KING (relieving)	6 December 1918
Stanley SMALL	27 January to 7 March 1930
Roy GODFREY	10 March 1930
Arthur GOODENOUGH	9 July 1937
Llewellyn ALLEN (relieving)	4 December 1940
William HAVILAH (relieving)	July to September 1943
Stanley SMALL	September to mid December 1943
Roy DEVINE (Wyong Central/ High first Principal)	16 December 1943
Robert HARDEN	31 January 1950
Colin PETRIE	1 April 1963
Ruth SCOBIE	1 February 1966
Leo O'MEARA	27 January 1970
Keith CURRY	28 January 1975
Neville FOUBISTER	2 February 1979
William STREATER	29 January 1985
Dr Robert FERGUSON	28 January 1986
Tom WILSON	
Helen MacDONALD	
Graham HOLMES	28 January 2006
Roslyn DAWES (relieving)	15 July 2013

## LONG SERVING TEACHERS

Mrs E.G. Harris, Mr Walker-Smith (who went on to Wyong High), Mrs MacDonald, Mrs J.Beath, Mrs M.Britt, Mr Bob Debenham, Mrs Harden, Mr Passlow, Mr Alan Sharpe, Mr Len Pascoe, Mrs Buck, Mr Viv Davenport, Mr John Clegg, Infants Principal Mrs Wendy Britten, Mr Gary Rees, Mrs Judith Wells and a special mention for Teachers' Aide Mrs Flo Dell.

Mrs Mary Cleary, sadly passed away long before her time.

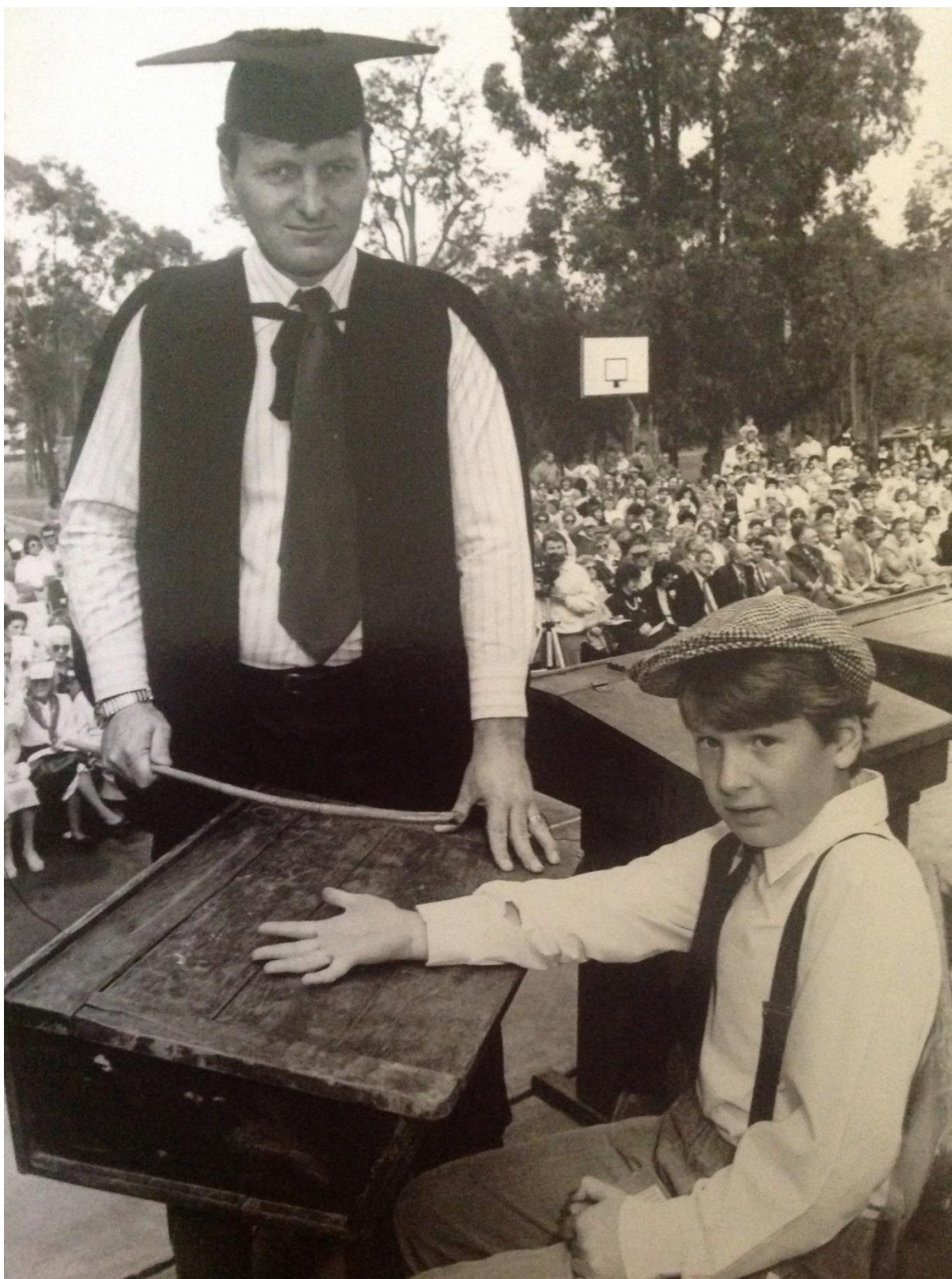
Other school staff include: Mr and Mrs Dolbell, Mrs Harris, Mr O'Donnell

Some dates from the 1980's :

**1987** The school rugby league team reached State knockout final

**1988** saw the celebration of **100 years of public education in Wyong**. Many of the older students returned to Wyong and revisited the old school in Alison Road as well as the old Infants site in North Road. A huge day was held on August 12th at the Cutler Drive site, and a plaque commemorating the event can be found outside the front office. The Local State Member of Parliament was Mr Harry Moore.





**1989** The girls cricket team made the final 8 in the State

**1980** Captains included Mark Gibson and Lucy Carniato

**1981** Steven Perry and Joanne Hitchcock



- 1982** John Manning and Joanne Palmer
- 1983** Simon Bishop and Debbie Austin
- 1984** Tony Greentree and Lorrae Kirkhoff
- 1985** Aaron Bishop and Angela Cheong

### 2013 and 125 years later

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> the school hosted a celebration of 150 years of public education in Wyong. This included students from Wyong Grove and Wyong High Schools. **The Local member for Wyong, Mr Darren Webber MLA** has donated celebratory medallions for every student at Wyong Public and Wyong Grove Schools. The school captains of Wyong High will also be presented with medallions.

Annual School Reports now map the progress of the school. In 2012 there were 390 students enrolled. The students predominantly are still from Anglo Australian backgrounds, but there is an increasing number of students representing a range of ethnic backgrounds. Included are Afghani, German, Italian, Maori, Tongan, Arabic, Chinese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Korean, Indian and Japanese. This represents approximately 11% of the student population.

17% of students identify as being of Aboriginal background.

From the beginnings in 1888 with 63 students enrolled and 36 being the average attendance, the figures for 1900 are 101 enrolled and 71 average attendance. In 1920 there are 220 enrolled with 149 average. 1930 numbers drop to 207 with 167 average. 1940, 205 and 172. At the war's end in 1945 there are 269 primary with some 200 secondary students enrolled, hence the opening of Wyong High School. The 1950's saw a move to around 304 primary students, and in 1960 there were 359 enrolled with an average attendance of 327. Now we see significant growth.

**1965** 442 enrolled with 414 average attendance

**1970** 477 enrolled 465 average attendance

**1975** 553 enrolled 519 average attendance

**1980** 813 enrolled 746 average attendance

(Wyong Grove established 1981)

25 years ago from 2013, in 1988 there were 560 students enrolled and 510 average attendance.

## So how about your time at the school?

Now is as good a time as any to reflect and perhaps tell your story. And if you are currently at school, then start collecting for the next 25 years due in 2038.



