

ANME News

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Editor: Dr Geoffrey Burkhardt

Annual Excursion: Connecting with Our Regional Schools

On Saturday 10th September, participants in the Annual ANME Excursion visited four local regional NSW schools, all of which were established in the nineteenth century, being among the oldest established schools in the Monaro District. They are, Queanbeyan Public School (est. 1864), Christ Church School Queanbeyan (est. 1843), Sutton Public School (est. 1871) and Gundaroo Public School (est. 1898).

A most distinguishing feature of the Queanbeyan Public School is its oldest building, a stone structure erected by a local builder in 1877. Credit is due to the school and the NSW Department of Education over recent decades for conserving and restoring this Victorian era heritage building. Its interior has been very well conserved and is currently used for specialist classes and for staff offices. It is one of the few fine surviving examples of a well preserved and maintained natural local stone school building in NSW.



Queanbeyan Public School



Photos: Geoffrey Burkhardt

Queanbeyan Christ Church School, established in 1843, was the first school in the district. Like most early schools of that decade, it was established as a Church of England parish school. It is a single room building with thick composite material walls and originally with a shingle roof. It is located on the southern side of the present church in the spacious church grounds. Additions have been made to both the eastern and western ends of the original building.



Christ Church School

Photo: Roger Amos

The Sutton Public School, established in 1871, lost its early buildings in a fire in the 1920s, thus its earliest surviving buildings date from 1922. Now a school of over 200 students, which is large for such a small village, a notable feature is the number of families in the Sutton district which, for more than 100 years have continuously enrolled generation after generation of their children in the Sutton School. This is evident in the lists of names of local soldiers on the WWI and WWII War Memorial plaques on the School's imposing War Memorial Gates. During our visit to Sutton School we were invited to inspect a most interesting display of historical items from the School's archives which included Admission Registers, Class Rolls, historic photographs and Punishment Books.



Sutton Public School



Photos: Geoffrey Burkhardt

Gundaroo Public School was the fourth school of historical significance visited by our excursion group. The school was established in 1865 and its 150th Year Anniversary was celebrated on 21st March 2015. Its first teacher was Mr. Hugh McPhee. A feature of the school is the survival of its nineteenth century building, constructed in 1892 and still being used. It consists of a comparatively large classroom, of red brick construction, a well-lit building with large double hung windows, typical of many

NSW Department of Public Instruction public schools of the 1890's. We enjoyed a tour of the School, which now has a few more recent buildings



Gundaroo Public School Photo: Roger Amos

Our thanks go to the principal and staff of each of the schools visited for their generous hospitality and tours through their respective school buildings. Also, we extend our thanks to Professor Barney Dalgarno, Executive Dean of Education at the University of Canberra and Val Fixter, for inviting our group to pre-dinner refreshments at their home prior to a fireside dinner at “Grazing” in Gundaroo.

Gould League of Bird Lovers

The ANME has recently set up an interesting display of items related to the Gould League of Bird Lovers which includes some rare documents and membership certificates. ANME Collections Manager, Coralie Amos OAM, has prepared the following article, which outlines aspects of the history of the Gould League of Bird Lovers and the organization's role in Australian schools.

The Gould League of Bird Lovers was established in Victoria in 1909 by Jessie McMichael. In October 1910, a teacher Edward Webster and Headmaster George Finnigan launched The Gould League of Bird Lovers at the Wellington Public School in New South Wales. The Gould League was devoted to bird protection, prevention of egg theft, the promotion of interest in and knowledge of birds and to campaign for the establishment of bird sanctuaries. It was named to honour the work of ornithologist John Gould and his wife Elizabeth, a naturalistic artist.

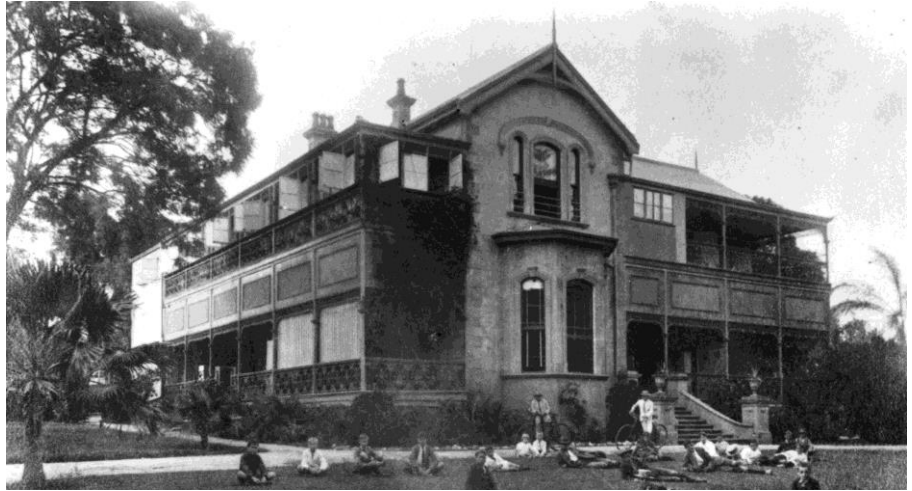
Large Certificates, then coloured cards, then badges were issued to all children, who became members. The initial cost was a penny. Children were encouraged to participate by learning bird names and their calls, writing poems and essays, drawing and photographing birds and entering the competitions. Bird Day and Bird Week were held featuring bird call competitions, music, dance, puppetry, and the Gould League Pledge.



Contributed by Coralie Amos OAM

Blackheath and Thornburgh College Archives, Charters Towers

By far the greatest asset we have is our magnificent building, Thornburgh House. Built by Edmund Harris Plant in 1890, Thornburgh House is now 132 years old and through those 132 years has been a focal point in the history of North Queensland, initially as a stately family home, then a boarding and teaching facility, and



Thornburgh College c. 1920.

Photo by courtesy of Blackheath and Thornburgh College Archives.

now as an administrative centre for the school. The school's archives are stored and displayed in this beautiful building.

The Charters Towers newspaper, *The Northern Miner*, published a description of Thornburgh House, its rooms and their functions, on Friday February 21st 1890. Thornburgh House was purchased by the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association in 1918. The establishment of the boarding college as Thornburgh College was due to the persistent efforts of Reverend R. E. Bacon, who enlisted financial help from local benefactors. The first eleven boys began school on June 16th 1919, under the big fig tree in front of the house, because an epidemic of Spanish flu was sweeping across Australia, and the world, and Queensland Health Department forbade indoor classes.

It has remained a school, though "ownership" has changed from a church body to an association of parents, and now a company with vested interests in its incredible history and accomplishments. The first floor was restored to original condition in 1994. In 2006, Thornburgh House was recognised as a place of cultural heritage significance under the Queensland Heritage Act, 1992. The roof and all the rooms upstairs and down were fully restored in time for Blackheath and Thornburgh College to celebrate its own centenary in 2019. The College Archives are now housed here thanks to the Blackthorn Past Students' Association (BPSA) major centenary project.

Contributed by Miss Jay Goodwin, Member of the BPSA Management Committee on behalf of the College Archivist, Mrs Kinsey Toomey.