

# ANME *News*

## Newsletter of the



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### **Visit to Bacchus Marsh Primary School**

ANME Curator, Dr Malcolm Beazley visited the historic Bacchus Marsh Primary School during his April trip to Victoria. This school is one of the earliest government schools to be established in Victoria (when it was still part of the colony of NSW). It was established as a “National School” in 1850. A more permanent brick school building was erected in 1865 and John Pascoe Fawkner is recorded as having been present at the official opening of the school, which was originally named Bacchus Marsh National School. The school has established a History Room containing timelines, photographs and artefacts. More details about the history of the school can be obtained from the school’s website, [www.bacchusmarshps.vic.edu.au](http://www.bacchusmarshps.vic.edu.au)

### **Annual ANME Field Trip**

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012 the ANME held its Annual Field Trip visiting two historic nineteenth century school buildings in the Yass District and two sites of former one- teacher schools in the Murrumbateman District. Friends of the ANME combined with Friends of the Hall School Museum group to travel by minibus to the four locations, Brooklands/Wallaroo school site, Yass Public School, Toul School building and Gooda Creek School site.

The Principal of the Yass Public School, Ms Jennifer Garnett, arranged a tour of her historic school buildings, the first of which was constructed in 1877, a Gothic revival style of architecture, designed by Mansfield, with tower, steep roofs and Gothic style windows. The group of visitors was entertained to afternoon tea in the old original classroom of the 1877 building with its high ceilings and wooden beams. Following the visit to Toul school, a one teacher classroom rural school building, established in 1888 and closed in 1931 and now on the property of Mr. Helm in the Murrumbateman District, the Field Trip group enjoyed a fine dinner in the Village of Murrumbateman.

### **Visit of Canberra District School Archivists to ANME**

On 26th March a meeting of the Canberra District School Archivists Group met in the ANME Display Room with Curator Dr. Malcolm Beazley and Assistant Curator Dr. Geoff Burkhardt. This was the first time the group had formally visited ANME. Following their meeting the group was given a tour of the recently opened Inspire Centre at the University of Canberra which may be the

focus of a multi-media exhibition relating to the history of schooling in Canberra, 1913-2013, during the Centenary celebrations next year.

### **Visit to ANME by Heritage Expert**

The ANME was pleased to assist Professor Jeff Brownrigg from the Donald Hrone Heritage Centre when he visited us on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Professor Brownrigg was interested in finding an example of a School Music Schools Broadcast Program from the late 1940s or the early 1950s. We were able to locate in our collection a couple of examples of these Australian Broadcasting Commission booklets for the period covering Dr. Brownrigg's research project.

### **Bush Schools of the Hall District Exhibition**

Both ANME's Curator and Assistant Curator attended the opening of the exhibition titled "Bush Schools of the Hall District" at Hall School Museum on 14<sup>th</sup> April. This excellent exhibition of photographs, documents, school books, school textbooks and school histories from 18 one-room, nineteenth century small bush schools in the Hall District was opened by Ms Jill Waterhouse, Canberra local historian and author of a number of local histories. The function was also addressed by the ACT Minister of Education, Mr Chris Burke. The exhibition was mounted as a major event during the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival.

### **Profile of a School Museum**

Starting from this number of the Newsletter the ANME proposes to include in each of its Newsletters a brief profile of an Australian School Museum which is registered on the Official ANME Register of Australian School Museums. We are pleased to introduce the first in this series, Alumny Creek School Museum in the Grafton District of NSW. The Newsletter editor expresses his gratitude to Mr John Adams OAM, Curator of the Alumny Creek School Museum for background notes supplied by him.

### **Alumny Creek School Museum**

Alumny Creek School Museum is in the Grafton District of NSW a few kms from the city. It consists of three weatherboard buildings – a classroom building containing an annex and entry porch, a teacher's residence adjacent to the school building and the school classroom of the old 1913 Jackadgery Public School building which was transported from its original location 50 kms west of Grafton to the Alumny Creek precincts recently.

The Alumny Creek School closed in 1969 and the classroom was used as a storage depot until the Alumny Creek Reserve Trust became involved in its restoration as a 1930s style classroom with rows of fitted desks and classroom artefacts, writing artefacts and school memorabilia from the school and district on display. The school opened in 1872, however the present schoolroom building was erected in 1907 following the destruction of the original combined residence and classroom during a storm. The complex of buildings was opened as a school museum in 1988. The Museum has become a repository for the records of some of the other local schools that have been closed during the twentieth century. Significantly the school museum also contains a school library which is comprised of many school readers, children's literature and school textbooks from early decades of the twentieth century. The buildings are situated in most attractive and spacious grounds, with trees surrounding the school buildings. At the rear of the building is a lush tropical nature reserve indicative of the types of dense vegetation which may have originally covered this part of the Alumny Creek which is a tributary of the Clarence River. The school complex now includes a former public recreation reserve comprising 10 acres.

## **ANME Research Project : *The First School Teachers in the Colony of New South Wales.***

The ANME reports the completion of the first two stages of an ANME ongoing research project into teachers in the Colony of NSW during its early decades. The Research Project Report titled, *The First School Teachers and Schools in Colonial New South Wales 1789-1810*, identifies thirty teachers who are known to have taught in the first schools in the colony. Biographical briefs of each of the thirty are included in the report and it is interesting to note that of the thirty teachers identified, eighteen were transported as convicts and five were missionaries returning to NSW from missionary appointments in the South Pacific. The first teacher in the infant Colony was actually a convict woman, Isabella Rosson, who arrived in the First Fleet, having been convicted of theft and sentenced to seven years transportation.

Among the conclusions of the Research Report is the evidence that within twenty years of the foundation of what was initially a penal colony, established without formal provision for the supply of teachers for the children of convicts, emancipists, soldiers, civil officers and free settlers, approximately a dozen schools were functioning across the thinly spread population of the colony by 1810. Also, the Report notes that at least four of the first thirty teachers in the colony to 1810 were women, three of them having been transported as convicts.

A copy of the ANME's Research Project Report is available for reference in the ANME Display Room at the University of Canberra.

### **What makes a school artefact/document or school textbook collectable?**

Volunteers, curators and school museum friends often worry about whether a donated item is suitable for inclusion in their school museum. What criteria may be used to decide whether an artefact or document warrants inclusion in the school museum collection? A simple guide to whether school artefacts and items are historically significant is outlined in the following, which is based upon and adapted from the now out-of-print publication, *Museum Methods: A Practical Manual for Managing Small Museums*, Museums Australia, Sydney, 1994, section 2.13.

### **Criteria for Establishing Historical Significance**

1. *Association:* Is the artefact, document or book associated with people, places or events related to the school, the school district or a school event? For example a school exercise book used by one of the school's pioneer pupils, which has his/her name, class and date inscribed on the cover of the book. Or, a school sports trophy won by the school at a district or state competition, with the school's name and date of event inscribed.
2. *Rarity:* While some school classroom items are ubiquitous, such as inkbottles and slates, others, common in the nineteenth century, may be rarely encountered today. An example is the genuine pen-knife, not a "pocket knife" but the tool especially designed for cutting the ends of feathered quills into nib shapes thus creating an instrument for writing. Another item now declared to be "rare" is the metal two pronged tuning fork used for the teaching of singing lessons mainly in small

one teacher bush schools which were not supplied with pianos or musical instruments in the nineteenth century.

3. *Aesthetic Value*: Is the item attractive to look at? Or an art form in itself? Good examples are nineteenth century school samplers which girls were encouraged to produce in their needlework lessons. These usually contain the girl's name and year of completion.

4. *Context*: Is the artefact one of a set or a series? How does it relate to the past pupils and school teachers of the school or the school district? Is it consistent with the time period of the school? For example, one would not exhibit a senior secondary school textbook in a primary school museum classroom display. Nor should one expect to see a 1940s Gestetner school duplicator displayed in a nineteenth century themed classroom.

## Recent Acquisitions

Among the recent acquisitions received by ANME was a batch of late nineteenth and early twentieth century school textbooks used in the teaching of Latin at the secondary school level. These were donated by Mr Tom Campbell of Canberra. Among the dozen textbooks received from Mr Campbell were Latin Grammars, Latin Readers and study books. It should be appreciated that although Latin is taught in very few secondary schools today, it was a compulsory subject in the nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial and state secondary school curricula for those students who wished to proceed to university studies. This donation makes a valuable contribution to the ANME's research collection of school textbooks used in Australian schools during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## SCHOOL MUSEUMS

A Handbook for Their Planning and Management



Compiled by

Geoffrey Burkhardt and Malcolm Beazley



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