



Willow Grove Primary School
2520
(Formerly Latrobe River State School &
Willow Grove State School)
1883-2023



The Pre-War Years 1900-1914



LATROBE RIVER SCHOOL 1902, TEACHER MR CORNWALL



SCHOOL CONCERT EARLY 1900S

The early 1900s was the beginning of great change for the school community. Coming from increased student numbers, changes were made to the school to create space for the students. Ten Head Teachers passed through the school in the 14 years before the outbreak of World War One.

The Head Teachers included: Joseph Cornwall, Mary Foster, Gertrude Bowden, Catherine Graham, Alma Rushbrooke-Leckey, Patrick Cooney, Frederick Pritchard, Percy Spriggins and Arthur Abbott.

Mr Cornwall laid out a school garden in 1902.

On Tuesday 18th of April 1905 the school held its annual picnic. It was attended by parents, children and friends. Mr. Cornwall organised races and games etc. The various prize winners were: - W. Lamont, D. Turnbull, F. Lamont, G. Stephens, W. Fowler, J McDonald, W. Mc Donald, B. Robins, J. August, W. Irvine, V. Guadion, J. Lecky, Sylvia Robins, Jennie Turnbull, Amy Irvine, Linda McLaren, Kate McDonald, Edith Nicholson, Ettie Lawdorn, Daisy Dodemaide, Alice Gaudion, Mary Needham, Nellie Griffiths, Nellie McLaren and Rose Fechner. Mrs August (a visitor from Melbourne) presented

two handsome books to Miss Myrtle Usher and Master George Gaudion, as rewards for personal neatness. Mrs August scrutinized the pupils as regards nails, hands, brushed boots, arrangement of attire, before coming to her decision. One of the many events during the day was a good attendance race in which nine pupils who had not missed a single day of school in 1904 competed. It was won by Miss Nellie McLaren who was eight years.

In October of 1905 the beginning of the endeavours to have the school moved to the township reserve began. The Education Department was opposed to the removal. (It would take another 20 years before the school was finally shifted.)

On the 12th of September the local community gathered to farewell Mr. Joseph Cornwell, head teacher for the past five and a half years. Student, W. Lamont, presented Mr. Cornwell with a gold medal with the inscription: - "To Mr J. Cornwell, from friends and pupils of S.S. 2520, Latrobe River."

"Much regret is felt generally – by both parents and scholars – regarding Mr Cornwell's transference to Eddington. As a live teacher he was incomparable; therefore, it is easily understood why sorrow is felt at his departure." (The Narracan Shire Advocate, Tue 18 Sep 1906, pg.3)
Mary Foster was appointed temporary Head Teacher.

Gertrude Bowden replaced Mary Foster in 1908. She was qualified to teach gymnastics and drawing. She was also improving the equipment in the school. Catherine Graham was appointed as Temporary Head Teacher after she transferred.

In March 1910 Correspondent for Board of Advice No. 323, Mat Mitchell wrote to the Department: "I have the honour to submit for your consideration some remarks passed on by Mr. Williams, Chairman of this Board, at our last meeting relative to S.S. 2520 La Trobe River. Mr. Williams said that the name La Trobe River was misleading and confusing and this Board therefore respectfully suggests that the Department now officially recognise the S.S. 2520 as the Willow Grove S.S." The matter was referred to District Inspector John Rowe who in turn reported: "Willow Grove is the name by which the location is known for miles around and therefore, would be much more suitable".
Approval was given and the name change took effect from 5 April 1910. (Willow Grove P.S. 2520 Centenary 1883-1983).

Miss Alma Rushbrooke, who later became Mrs Leckey, was given a formal farewell in February of 1913. She had been in charge of the 'Grove school since 1910 and had endeared herself to the pupils and was highly thought of by the parents. She was presented her with a necklet. Mr Arthur Abbott was installed as her replacement.

Empire Day was celebrated on the 25th of May 1914, with the school picnic. The school committee have obtained the picture entitled "The Opening of the First Commonwealth Parliament", by King George V., which was presented to the school by the parents and friends of the children. The picture will be quite a feature in the decorations and should be much appreciated on account of its historical value. (Trafalgar and Yarragon Times, Fri 5 Jun 1914)