

# "MEETING THE CHALLENGE"

BY FRANK BARR.  
BLAYNEY HIGH SCHOOL.

## EVENTS SINCE 1939.

Records are very difficult to obtain for the period since the beginning of 1939 when the Education Department altered its method of filing its records. The records do exist, but the author has been reliably informed that the methods of indexing and filing material do not ensure the finding of any particular document.

The Headmasters, now called Principals, are indicated in the lists at the end of the text. Details of the names of Assistants have not been sought as most of the knowledge is in the memories of living people.

In 1978, a new Building, harmonising with the architectural style of the existing building, was constructed and officially opened on 25th November, 1978, by the then Minister for Education, Mr. Eric Bedford. The "Lyndhurst Shire Chronicle" of 24th November, 1978, reported:

"The new building was constructed to cater for the increased numbers of pupils as a result of the closing of the Convent School in 1969 and the later construction of Carcoar Dam and the Highway By-Pass.

At the time, 80 pupils were crowded into the old school with storage space at a minimum and the Principal's office, Staffroom, Sick Bay and Duplicating Rooms all crammed into two rooms with a combined area of only 6 square yards."

"Now, facilities at the school are second to none, but, ironically, the present school population warrants the appointment of only two teachers."

"One former classroom has become the Principal's office and School Museum, while the other is

now a Resource Room for Art, Craft, Drama, Music, Film and Television work."

## TEACHERS OR PRINCIPALS

1857-59	John Poole Ollis.
1860-62	David Skene Ogilvy.
1862-64	Thomas J. Holland.
1864-76	William Thompson.
1876-77	James Leggett.
1878-82	David Hay.
1882-84	Patrick James Ryan.
1885-89	John Youll.
1889-09	Alfred William Page.
1009-17	William C. Wilson.
1918-22	A. Wines.
1923-27	William John Roach.
1928	Eveline May Laird (Reliev.).
1928-33	Henry Thomas Lindsay Harris.
1934	John Mckenzie Shaw.
1935	John Britt (Reliev.).
1935-38	Archibald Alexander Whyte.
1939-40	W. Elliott.
1941-42	F. Daly.
1943-49	Cecil Handcock.
1950-51	K. McDonald.
1952-58	E. Hogan.
1959-61	G. Robinson.
1962-65	William Hey.
1966-71	Larry Bede Keegan.
1972-75	John Simington.
1976-80	John Clegg.
1981-	Trevor L'Homme.

## NEVILLE (Formerly Mount Macquarie)

### EARLIEST MOVES.

The story of this school, as far as written documents tell it, began on 13th October, 1858, when a formal application for a National School at Mount Macquarie was signed and dated by James Grant (Roman Catholic), David Scott (Presbyterian), Charles Green (Church of England), William Sikes (sic) (Wesleyan) and Edward Buckley (Church of England).

The applicants estimated that 25 Boys and 25 Girls would be eligible and likely to attend — 27 Church of England, 4 Presbyterian, 3 Wesleyans and 16 Roman Catholic. The proposed cost of the building was £300 of which locals would provide an initial £100 and there after £1 per week. The building offered until a proper school could be built, was described as "a schoolroom 22' x 16', a classroom 16' x 8', two rooms at right angles, a dwelling house for the master, 14' x 14' each, and a detached 10' square, with height 10' to the wall plate. We propose to build of slabs lathed, plastered and shingled." John and Elizabeth Latimer were offered as the teachers.

A return, dated 3rd March, 1859, to the National Board of Education, gave Latimer's date of appointment as 1st December, 1858, and on 21st January, 1859, Latimer wrote requesting his December salary which he had not yet received. This indicates that teaching began early in December, yet the author could find anywhere

an exact date given for the first day of teaching under the auspices of the National Board of Education.

It is interesting to note that this National School differed from the first two — Carcoar and Blayney — established in the district in that they were Vested Schools receiving more assistance than this Non-vested School. In the return mentioned above, Latimer had informed the National Board that 28 eligible children were not attending because the school was not in a central location. It is not surprising, then, that the school was closed for two weeks in April, 1859, while the building was moved one mile to the Village Reserve, Number One Swamp.

As could be expected, the National Board made a deduction of half of Latimer's salary for April, arousing an angry reaction which was supported by Edward Buckley who wrote on behalf of the Local Patrons. He said that he supported the teacher, repayment for the fortnight in dispute, and pointed out that the teacher worked for the whole time moving and re-building the school, and then kept the school operating over Easter. He went on to emphasise that only seven days of schooling were lost.

The above-mentioned letter of Buckley's was dated 28th May, 1859, and was followed by another on 25th June. In the latter communication he sent a sketch of the ground plan of the Village Reserve at Number



One Swamp. "The site is on the E side of the S allotment of Section 7." He went on to state: "And Sir, you will much oblige us if you will make application for the said site as we are very anxious to get the new school erected."

**TROUBLE BEGINS.**

The Police Magistrate at Carcoar, Mr. Owen C. Beardmore, wrote to the Board on 23rd July, 1859, alleging that Latimer had been purchasing beef from known cattle thieves. On 4th August, the Board sent Latimer a request for an explanation which he wrote on 13th August. Latimer stated that he refused to give information to the Magistrate because he respected Buckley and Vane (from whom he obtained his meat). On 19th July, the Magistrate had fined Vane £10 for selling beef, **suspected** of being stolen, to Latimer yet the beast's ownership was in dispute between Vane and John Grant. Latimer had already written to the Local Patrons on 4th August and they were going to prosecute Beardmore for defamation. It was also interesting that John Grant had left the district by 17th March, 1860. The Board reprimanded everyone.

Dispute with the Board began over the construction of a new schoolhouse towards the end of 1859. With a letter of 10th October, Buckley sent a plan of the school for which the walls (substantial) were up and the shingle roof was on. They were awaiting the Board's grant "to floor the building throughout, lath and plaster the walls inside, furnish the schoolroom, enclose the ground, and erect closets, etc."

The Local Patrons set a value of £100 on what they had already done, but Architect Robertson pointed out that there was insufficient accommodation for a Master and that a Classroom was needed as well as the 26' x 17' Schoolroom. Eventually E. J. C. North of Carcoar and John Gorringer set a value of £65, despite the objections of the Local Patrons. Various tenders were submitted to complete the building, but it was not clear which was accepted.

Certainly the matter and the construction dragged on, for on 24th December, 1860, Buckley was requesting a progress payment of £65 because "the contractor does not have the means to carry on with building without such payment." By 14th March, 1861, Buckley requested a final payment of £65 and it was paid on 30th March. On 13th April, Buckley wrote a letter of thanks to the Board now that the new school was opened and requested the enrolment of Latimer as the "vested" teacher.

Personal differences among the local people grew and showed evidence of themselves amongst the Local Patrons. 19th March, 1861, saw Buckley requesting "variations on Local Patrons as decided by a

local meeting" which wanted the removal of Messrs. J. Grant, D. Scott and C. Green who were "dilatatory in acting" and the following five men added to Buckley and Sykes: Messrs. William Browning and Richard Browning (both Wesleyan), George Lobby and John Wood (both Church of England) and William Vane (Presbyterian).

Apparently, action on this was very slow because William Sykes, as Secretary, wrote to the National Board on 16th September, 1861, with a proposal to reduce school fees in order to try to increase attendance. The unpleasantness appears to have grown and become more complicated over a three-year period and led to a letter of complaint about Latimer from William Sykes, Charles Green and David Scott. The Board's Agenda for 2/ 12/ 64 contained the following: "Mt. Macquarie: Conduct of teacher. Communication with J. Grant. Refer to Inspector."

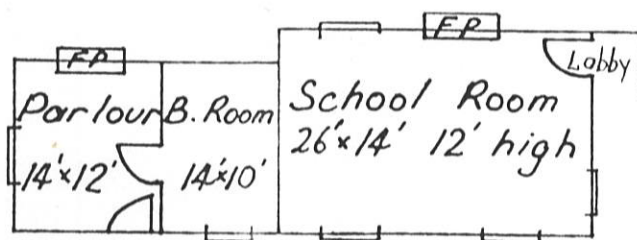
Prior to the above-mentioned meeting of the Board, the Local Patrons and Latimer had both written to the Board. The Patrons wrote about the new Patrons (H. Smith, C. E. Secretary, James Grant, R. C. Treasurer, E. Buckley C.E., D. O'Brien R.C., W. Vane P., J. Luck P., W. Browning W. and R. Browning W.) refuted allegations made by Messrs. Green, Scott and Sykes. On 21st November, Latimer wrote with unsubstantiated allegations: 1. that Charles Green's son was harbouring bushrangers. 2. William Sykes was a bullock driver often away, and had not been to the school for nine months previously. 3. that David Scott had since been apprehended for having stolen property in his house.

Letters flew from all directions, fast and furious, until the Board requested Mr. Inspector Dwyer to conduct an inquiry. He obliged on 24th January, 1865, and concluded his report as follows: "The teacher may have acted with precipitancy in the course he pursued on the day of the meeting, but under all the circumstances, and making allowance for the gratuitous insult to his wife, few persons could have acted with more moderation. The grossest and most palpable error with which the teacher might be, but is not, accused consists in his rather familiar intercourse with one of the complainants; — naturally of a somewhat volatile temperament Mr. Latimer is often very incautious in his observations and imprudent in his conduct and these defects are doubtless heightened when the arguments of two half-excited persons are stimulated by circulation of the bottle, as appears to have been the case on the occasion of the insult complained of by Sykes."

**TEACHER, ATTENDANCE AND BUILDINGS.**

Back in 1861, Mr. Inspector McCann visited Mt. Macquarie and reported on Latimer's need of some form of formal training. On 29th November, William Wilkins wrote to McCann asking whether he would recommend that Latimer should attend the Model School in Sydney for a month. This, Latimer duly did for on 21st February, 1863, he was applying for reimbursement of expenses with coach fare alone being £6.10.0.

On 18th February, 1865, the Local Patrons wrote to the Board stating that they had met, decided that there was a need of a new school and had begun to





collect subscriptions. Their desire was for a stone and weatherboard structure, lathed and plastered, with a schoolroom 40' x 17', classroom 15' x 17' and communicating, and with desks on stages at 12" intervals. On 30th May, Architect Robertson sent plans and specifications for a new building with stone foundations, weatherboard walls, brick chimney, shingle roof, lathed and plastered inside." Unfortunately, it was fourteen years before the building was constructed.

In January, 1866, Latimer wrote to the Board, "You will much oblige to send my letters or packets for the future to J. Latimer, Mount Macquarie National School, Teesdale. It being more convenient than Carcoar." A year later he was writing to the Council of Education about his salary and complained that his salary was then smaller than when he had been a probationer. He was very disillusioned about the fate of spending his time in the bush.

Compared with matters already explained and others yet to be recounted, it seems almost unimportant to observe that for the usual wide variety of reasons in a rural district, and because of dislike of the teacher, attendance was very irregular and low attendance was one reason for Latimer's problems in regard to his salary.

### THINGS GET WORSE.

June, 1867, saw Mr. D. O'Brien withdraw his children from the school because of an allegation that Latimer had written to the Council stating that O'Brien was unfit to be on the Local School Board because he could neither read nor write. Latimer vehemently denied having done so.

Until this time, the situation may have been bad but it soon became much worse, because on 11th June, 1867, a letter complaining about the management of the school was written to the Council by William Beddie, Robert Rice and William Sykes. This followed two meetings held in the Presbyterian Church on 25th May and 8th June when seven questions were asked of Latimer who gave answers. The church was used as the venue because the Local School Board would not allow use of the school.

Mr. Inspector Coburn conducted an inquiry on 30th June and 1st July and concluded his report: "The enquiry was difficult to conduct, owing to the strong feelings displayed against the Teacher and Local Board; and it was very evident that there exists a determination on the part of several residents to thrust the Teacher out of his situation." There was a flurry of letters between then and October and amongst them Robert Rice made numerous allegations against Latimer, and in a letter of defence Latimer laid very heavy labels on Messrs. Healy, Moss and Sykes.

Despite his aversion to the situation, Coburn had to investigate and report again. In his report of 24th October, he largely supported Latimer and two paragraphs are quoted: "In order to place the case fairly before the Council, it may be proper to mention that the residents are divided into two parties, one, the smaller, comprising those who advance the charges who are generally of doubtful reputation and who have up to

this time, done little to evince an interest in the school; the other, comprising the larger and more respectable class of persons who form the support of the school. It is an instructive feature in the case that most of the offences with which the teacher is accused occurred some years ago and are now brought under the notice of the Council for the first time. It is my belief that the charges are made from petty vindictive motives rather than with bona fide intention to improve the character or raise the tone of the school....

"After a careful consideration of all the facts of the case, I beg to make the following recommendations: 1. That the Local Board be invited to a careful study of their duties as laid down in the Council's Regulations and that they be especially informed that their permitting the schoolroom to be used for Balls and the like objects is a direct infringement of these Regulations; 2. That the Teacher be degraded one step in his classification, and severely cautioned respecting his future conduct particularly with reference to his making erroneous entries in the School Registers."

### IN QUIETER WATERS.

For about four years, relative peace and quiet prevailed and more important matters occupied letter writers. On 27th October, 1868, Mr. W. Browning wrote to the Council on the need for financial assistance to add a necessary additional room for the teacher. It was to be a room 13' x 16' of stringy-bark walls sawn slabs to rest on sleepers, boarded floor and shingled roof. A builder estimated the cost at £33 of which the locals would find the usual one-third.

On 3rd April, 1869, Browning wrote again informing that the building was completed, that the locals had paid their £11 share, and that they now awaited the remittance of £22 from the Council. Then, from 23rd October to 19th November, Latimer built a new kitchen because the old one had fallen down and gained reimbursement from the Council of the £6 which it cost.

The Postmaster General for N.S.W., having decided to establish a Post Office at No. 1 Village, wrote to the Council seeking its approval for the appointment of Latimer as Postmaster. This was made on 4th November, 1869, and despite theoretical objections, Council agreed to it on 10th November and endorsed on 6th July, 1870.

On 6th January, 1870, Messrs. J. Grant, R. and W. Browning (Members of the Local School Board) wrote to the Council stating their satisfaction with Latimer and recommending him for promotion. The Council referred the matter to Mr. Inspector John McCredie who did not agree and stated that Latimer had to apply himself more assiduously to his work. This, Latimer duly did, and on 5th March received favourable comments from the Inspector, especially since the school had grown from 7 to 51 (In the March Quarter of 1867, the enrolment had been 41 with an A.D.A. of 29.6). When the matter of promotion was again put to McCredie later in the month he was quite unflattering about it.

Mr. Edwin Coek (Wesleyan) wrote to the Council on 28th September, 1870, nominating himself and Mr. J. Moss (Presbyterian) for the L.S. Board and also queried



the school's scale of fees. On 10th November, the Council replied that there was no sanctioned scale of fees. On 3rd August, 1871, the Board asked the Council to add to its membership Messrs. Mark Wells Pascoe and Edwin Cock and had the support of Mr. George Woolnough, Member for Bathurst.

In a very lengthy letter to the Council on 6th October, 1871, Mr. Inspector or McCredie had much to say about the composition of the Board, Latimer's sectarian activities and quoted portion of a letter from Edwin Cock: "Mr. Latimer did not tell you that through his conduct, he himself was expelled from one school as a Teacher, but it was done in the mildest possible way, viz. by requesting him to resign. I think I can truly say that Mr. Latimer has caused more contention by his party prejudices than any other man in the district." He concluded by recommending Messrs. Edwin Cock (Wesleyan) and David Scott (Presbyterian) for addition to the Local School Board.

McCredie submitted, in relation to the Board, that because sectarian issues in the community were very strong, the composition of the Board had to represent the enrolment pattern in the school: 17 C.E., 9 R.C., 7 P. and 3 W. The Council approved of McCredie's recommendations but in a lengthy letter of 26th December, Cock resigned because Mr. Mark Pascoe had not been appointed.

### THE INEVITABLE EXPLOSION.

During 1872, apparently more and more people withheld their children from the school because of ill-feeling towards either Latimer or some of his supporters. Inspector McCredie observed early in the year that removal could solve the problem for Latimer, but this was complicated by Latimer's ownership of a farm close to the school. Because of lower attendance, even to the danger of closure, McCredie offered Half Time with Coombing Creek (Shaw).

In a letter dated 8th March, Latimer rejected the Half Time offer, and complained about McCredie's friendship with William Beddie, a known enemy to Latimer. A Mr. Henry entered the lists and in a letter of 18th June refuted Latimer's claims and referred to Latimer's propensity for squabbles. Latimer decided, after it had become too late, to take the fight to McCredie, and in a letter of 13th May made formal accusations against McCredie including unprofessional conduct. In taking this course of action, Latimer had burnt his bridges — he had to make his charges stick against McCredie and get his scalp or his own scalp was there for taking.

William Beddie weighed in again with another letter on 20th June, giving no support at all to Latimer and ending as follows: "As I have now given you my statement, I beg to observe that I was resident here before the Mt. Macquarie School was opened by Mr. Latimer, and from what I have seen of his character and behaviour in associating with the lowest in the neighbourhood, in drinking, fighting, lying and squabbling, immodest conduct to females, and falsifying his school registers, in going among his associates on Sundays with bottles of grog and frequenting shanties, I consider him a disgrace to the profession and quite unfit

to have oversight over children, and he has been a great hurt in the district, owing to great number of children being kept away from school — and some who are at the present time forced to send their children to his school, owing to their distance from another school, would rejoice in his removal."

Latimer had put his neck on the chopping block and on 29th June, the Council decided that "The teacher be asked to show cause who he should not be dismissed for bringing false accusations against the Inspector." Latimer now lifted the executioner's axe for the Council by writing, on 27th July, a letter in which he attacked Wilkins and the Council. On 2nd August, Latimer closed the school because he had heard that McCredie had called a meeting of parents. He had written to the Council on 25th July and a notation dated 1st August was added to it by the Council: "The Council dismissed Mr. Latimer from his office of Teacher in the Mount Macquarie Public School from 10th August instant." Latimer did cease teaching on 10th August and his departure inventory was dated 12th August and signed by Latimer, W. Browning and James Grant. Thus ended John Latimer's eventful fourteen years at the school.

### IN SMOOTHER WATERS.

It appears that the school was closed for eight and a half months after Latimer's dismissal because his successor, Mr. John Paradise, did not receive his appointment until May, 1873. For some years the records contain very little material — nothing for 1873, 1875 and 1876. There is only one item for 1874: a letter from Mr. James Grant stating that he held the joint offices of Chairman and Honorary Secretary of the Public School Board for the Mount Macquarie Public School.

During 1876, problems of attendance still continued and the A.D.A. fell below 30 and there was threat of reduction to the status of a Provisional School. Fortunately, the position improved considerably during 1879, for the A.D.A. for March was 34.7, June 34.9 and July 35.7. This led the Council of Education to decide to erect the new school first mooted fourteen years ago.

The members of the Local School Board in January, 1879, were James Grant, David Scott, John Moss, Edwin Cock, Richard Browning Snr. and Richard Browning Jnr. In August, Mr. W. M. Pascoe, who was not a member of the Board, wrote to the Council pointing out his belief that the new school, as planned, would be too small. However, it was claimed that the new school would accommodate 62 pupils.

Six tenders were submitted to the Council for the erection of the new school and they were: Josiah Shakespear £790, S. F. Smith £800, J. Kenny £842.12.0, J. W. Ashworth £900, John Cody £975 and W. Findlay £1,005. Of course, Shakespear was awarded the contract and progress payments of nearly \$150 with a final payment of nearly £350 became due as follows: 7th February, 28th February, 16th April and 28th July, 1880.

In September, Mr. M. W. Pascoe unsuccessfully applied for permission to use the school for the meetings of the local branch of the Farmers' Union. During 1881, Cock lodged applications for the establishment of an Evening Public School which Mr. Inspector Bridges



recommended on 30/ 6/ 82. Its A.E.A<sup>7</sup> was 11 for the week ending 17/ 11/ 82, 8 for the week ending 24/ 11/ 82 down to only 4 in 1/ 12/ 82. The decline was explained by "the busy season on farms."

For various reasons which do not need to be mentioned, Paradise ran into troubles. When Mr. Inspector Allpass visited on 10th June, 1882, he recommended that Paradise be removed from the now Class IX school. On 26th September, Paradise defended himself from an unfavourable report on inspection from Mr. George Ed Long. Some parental complaints followed and in 1883, on 25th January, Long strongly recommended removal which was finally effected in July. Mr. Edward Coleman was appointed to replace Paradise on 21st July.

### MUNDANE DEVELOPMENTS AND PROGRESS.

Epidemic illnesses here wrought the same havoc as they did in other communities: in October, 1884, the school was closed for two weeks because of Diphtheria, and in October, 1885, for another two because of Whooping Cough.

In April, 1886, Coleman was removed and was replaced by Mr. Colin McNicol from Trunkey. The school grew and the A.D.A. exceeded 50 during 1886 because a Pupil Teacher, Alexander McDonald, was appointed during 1886 and the school had been raised significantly in status to that of a Class VI school. In November, 1886, McNicol applied for removal to another Class VI school but it took a full year for his wish to be granted.

The 1888 school year (and the N.S.W. Centenary year) saw Mr. George Blackler commence duties on 17th January. He had come from Waugoola Public School where his popularity was such that on 3rd April he was allowed a day's leave to return to Woodstock to receive a testimonial from the Waugoola people.

1888 was also a very important year for this little community because on 24th November, the decision was made to change its name from Mount Macquarie and Number One Swamp to that of the Parish in which it was located — hence, the village of Neville came on to the map.

In the week beginning 18th March, 1889, the school was closed for one week while repairs were done to the school and a kitchen was built for the teacher. The work was done by Shandley & Son using materials from the old Haverton Hill School, but they left before doing the painting properly. As a result, £10 was deducted from their payment. The local Members of Parliament, Messrs. C. L. Garland and John Plumb, took up the matter of the construction of a weathershed.

During 1890, Blackler was involved in the matter of the disposal of the old school called Thommond (locally Somers). Something with which he should not have been concerned must have taken too much of his time, especially since the return to the Department was only £4.10.0.

This same year saw the local community raise £1.15.0 for Arbor Day and Blackler applied to Mr. Inspector John Kevin for the Department to resume one acre on the eastern side of the school for additional playground area. 23rd September was gazetted a Public



*Neville Public School and Residence, 1983.*

Holiday in Neville for the Annual Ploughing Match and Blackler closed the school. "A Parent" reported the matter to the Minister but Inspector Kevin supported Blackler when he conducted an inquiry. Blackler was also an office-bearer in the Neville School of Arts and the correspondent for one of the Blayney newspapers. Mr. A. Harris did the reporting this time and again Kevin supported Blackler. During October, Edwin West was appointed a Pupil Teacher.

The schoolground was drained during 1891 and a fence was constructed around it to keep out the pigs from the neighbourhood. Of course, it was also necessary to install suitable gates. In December of the same year, a door was added to the verandah to keep swallows out.

### CONTINUING PEACE AND PROGRESS.

In May, 1902, Amelia Sprague from Blackheath was appointed a Pupil Teacher, but her mother was most displeased. It was, therefore, no surprise that she resigned at the end of the year because of the mother's health.

1897 saw the replacement of Blackler who was removed to Browns Creek. His replacement was Mr. William Fowles who remained in Neville for nearly eleven years. In June, 1903, Miss E. M. Corry was appointed as a Pupil Teacher.

"A Parent" used his/ her poison pen again in 1905 but little notice seems to have been taken of the complaint. In May, 1906, overtures were made about conveyance subsidy to bring children from Shaw which was a Half Time School with Hanover. Since Shaw was changed to a Provisional School, and then to a Public School in October, 1907, it would appear that the application obtained a negative reply.

Whooping Cough was raging in January, 1909, but the Department would not grant a request to close the school for two weeks.

Miss Annie T. O'Donnell was appointed as the Assistant in March, 1910, while in August of that year, Fowles was removed to Shadforth and replaced by one with a name well known in the district — Hugh Neal, who came from Rockley. In August, 1911, Neal had to take Sick Leave for a month and was relieved by Mr. Frank W. Wharton from Woomargama, near Holbrook. At the beginning of the school year for 1912, Miss Isobel Hilda Neal of Lily Grive and Miss O'Donnell exchanged