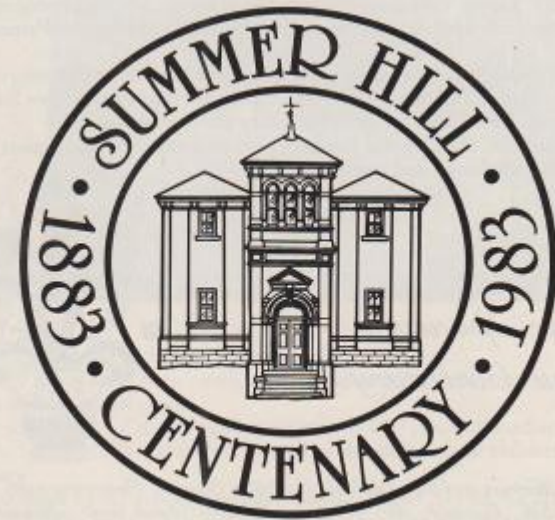


*Summer Hill
Public School
Centenary*



1883 ~ 1983

*One Hundred Years
of History*



Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Robert Browning.



Acknowledgements

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*Many thanks
to these Sponsors
of our Centenary.*



The Mayor, Ald. J. Herman and the Ashfield Municipal Council. Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Summer Hill. Manager: Mr. W. Price, Westpac Bank Corp., Summer Hill. Manager: Mr. J. Condon, Allied Mills Pty. Ltd., Summer Hill. Spencers Meats, Summer Hill. A.R. & V.J. Spencer Newsagency, Summer Hill. Mr. C. Gresham Summer Hill Hotel. Mrs. Chase Sommersets Wool Shop, Summer Hill. Mr. T. Somerset. Speedwood Sales, Summer Hill. Celebration Cakes, Summer Hill. Mr. A. Hill Macysou Villanueva. Total Image Distributor. Summer Hill Winery, Summer Hill Franklins Pty. Ltd., Leichhardt Markettown Mayfair Foods. Weng Wah, Restaurant Summer Hill.



Summer Hill Public School



Foreword

Summer Hill Public School is 100 years old!

A century has always been considered an outstanding achievement and a milestone in many areas of human endeavour.

At this school, one of the things it represents is 100 years of hard work and effort on the part of those who were the educators as well as the multitude of children who have been educated here.

Many changes have been witnessed since that distant day on the 7th May, 1883 when Summer Hill Public School began in a converted wooden weathershed . . . changes in our school, changes in education, changes in our suburb and changes in society itself.

As I read the reminiscences of ex-students, listened to anecdotes and memories being recounted by senior members of our community and uncovered interesting historical facts from the archives, I was often moved by the pleasant memories and obvious affection many people have for their old school.

To-day, in 1983, Summer Hill Public School is one which is very much involved with its multicultural community. It is a school which has children from all parts of the world and they bring with them the wealth of experiences offered through their different races, languages, religions and cultural backgrounds.

Summer Hill Public School has a proud tradition and special sense of identity to pass on to those future generations of children who will be educated here. This Centenary year of 1983 should thus be looked upon as one which celebrates that solid foundation laid over the past century for that of the next.

John Hathorn
Principal 1983

Memorandum from Inspector John Jones

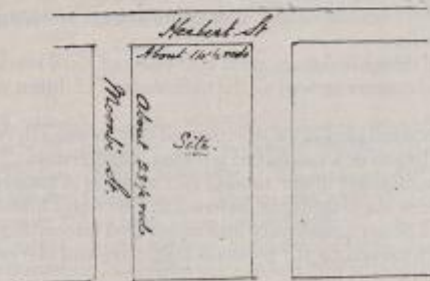
West Sydney DISTRICT.

B. C.

His Inspector M. G. Jones
Memorandum of Inspector to the Secretary.

Summerhill: in re. Question as to the resumption
of land for Public School purposes

Being of opinion that a Public
School is needed to meet the educational
requirements of Summerhill, Dulwich, Sea
View and South Lewisham, I beg to recommend
that the following block of land belonging
to Mr Bartlett of Prospect Hill, Summerhill,
be resumed as a site for such school.



Had to that end, I would further
recommend that a surveyor's plan and description
of the land be obtained.

Sydney
26th 10. 81

J. S. Jones.
Inspector.

The Beginning

The origins of Summer Hill Public School can be precisely dated to a memorandum written by one of the inspectors of the Sydney district, John Jones, on 26 October, 1881:

"Being of opinion that a Public School is needed to meet the educational requirements of Summerhill, Dulwich, Sea View and South Lewisham, I beg to recommend that the following block of land belonging to Mr. Bartlett of Prospect Hill, Summerhill, be resumed as a site for such school."

Unlike most of the large city schools opened in 1883, Summer Hill was not a conversion from a former church school. And, unlike most of the country schools opened that year, it was not the result of local initiative, which involved collecting the signatures of all the parents on an official application form and persuading the Department that a school was necessary. Rather, it was the Department itself which decided to build Summer Hill Public School to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population of Sydney's western suburbs.

The Public Institution Act

In 1880, after many years of debate about the reforms needed in the government school system of New South Wales, which dated from 1848, the *Public Instruction Act* was passed. The new Act set up the Department of Education under a Minister, introduced compulsory education, lowered school fees, introduced secondary education into government schools and extended educational facilities in sparsely populated areas. The most controversial clause of the Act was the one which withdrew all state aid from church schools from the end of 1882, and resulted in the closure of most church schools except the Catholic ones. These changes, together with the rapid growth in the colony's population, produced a 60% increase in enrolments in government schools in the Department's first three years, and an acute accommodation crisis. Even with a massive increase in the annual expenditure on buildings, the new Department could not provide buildings quickly enough. To the handsome brick and stone buildings of the period were added a variety of cheap wooden buildings and school tents, plus a wide range of rented buildings, especially former church schools. By 1885 the crisis was over, although many schools were to operate for years in officially 'temporary' accommodation.

Choosing a Site

Jones had chosen a site of just over two acres, bounded by four streets, which was part of eight acres owned by James Bartlett which had just been placed in the hands of auctioneers. Jones believed that Bartlett's refusal to name a price was because he preferred to sell the land for housing in the quickly developing suburb.

Another local landowner, Thomas Nicholson, was anxious to sell to the Department some land a block further along Junction Road, with two partly built houses on it, but the Chief Inspector regarded Bartlett's land as "by far the best site in Summer Hill for a Public School", and in December 1881 it was decided to resume the land. The resumption was carried out early in February, and Bartlett accepted the Department's offer of £2857 for the land.

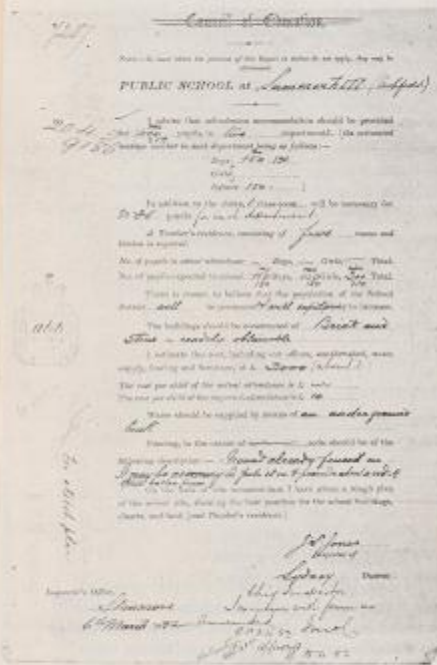
Handwritten notes and signatures:
The above mentioned land is available for sale by Messrs Nicholson and Thomas, from whom I have several times to learn that Mr Bartlett wants first lot without success. My impression is that he prefers to let by auction than let the Government resume it; and I am further of opinion that if such sale be effected, it will add to the expense and difficulty of the resumption. I would, therefore, recommend the resumption of the land as early as practicable.
J. S. Jones
26th 10. 81

James Bartlett's two acres

In March 1882 Jones filled out the standard building form, recommending schoolrooms for 400 pupils plus two small classrooms, and a substantial teacher's residence. His recommendations were amended, and in May the Department's architect, William Kemp, was instructed to prepare plans for

primary and infants departments, with each department having schoolroom accommodation for 150 and classroom space for 50 pupils. Two months later the clerk of Ashfield Municipal Council, Thomas Lassop, wrote to arrange a deputation from the aldermen to the Minister to urge the need for a start on the buildings. The Council was reassured to hear that the plans were underway, and decided not to proceed with the deputation: the aldermen were obviously unaware of Kemp's enormous backlog in the drafting room. When nothing had happened by the beginning of 1883, Thomas Nicholson wrote to the Department to complain that the people of Summer Hill had already suffered the inconvenience and expense of sending their children to distant schools for too long. "I do think this thing and popular Suburb should not be neglected any longer", he protested.

The plans were finally ready late in January 1883, and tenders were called immediately. Nevertheless, it was not until early in May that a contract was signed with Peter Graham of Croydon for £6995, stipulating that the work was to be completed by the beginning of 1884. As it turned out, the buildings were not to be ready for many months after that.



A brick and stone building.

A Tent School?

In February 1883 William Pigott, the local Member of Parliament, urged the Department to provide Summer Hill with a tent so that the school could open at last, even if the permanent buildings would not be ready for months. The Department accepted the need for action, but fortunately for the teachers and children decided that a temporary wooden building would be more suitable than one of the tents then, very unpopularly, in use at many schools. It was therefore decided to give Summer Hill a wooden building measuring 75 feet by 21, with an enclosed verandah (running the length of the building) where pupils could hang their hats and wash their hands. The building could accommodate about 200 pupils, seated in four blocks of desks and forms 12 feet long on a stepped floor, plus a high gallery containing forms 16 feet long but no desks. Later on the building could be converted into weathersheds. These buildings were widely used to meet the accommodation crisis, and Gardeners Road, Darlinghurst and Forest Lodge were amongst the schools which opened in 1883 in identical buildings. The building, together with tanks and a bell-post and temporary toilets, cost £619 to erect, and there was also £100 worth of furniture which could be used in the permanent buildings later on. An extra £60 was spent on fences across the site, to stop members of the public using the toilets and to keep the children away from the permanent buildings in progress. The work was completed on 24 April 1883.

Albert Studdy - The First Headmaster

The first headmaster of Summer Hill Public School, Albert Studdy, was appointed on 25 April, 1883. His arrival was delayed - he had to travel from Tenterfield - so the school was finally opened on Monday, 7 May. In the first week the enrolment was 139 with an average attendance of 106, and by the end of 1883 the figures had risen to 371 and 230 respectively. The original staff consisted of Studdy and a young pupil-teacher or apprentice, Elizabeth Pearce, but by the end of the year the staff probably numbered five. It was clear by September that the wooden building would soon be uncomfortably overcrowded, and that there was no chance of the permanent buildings being ready before the end of summer, so Studdy asked for another temporary buildings. Instead he was supplied with an old school tent from Waterloo Public School, and the infants moved into it in November.

There is no trace of the Department's file on the permanent buildings at Summer Hill, so the reasons for the long delay remain obscure. It seems that the fault lay with the contractor, and if so it was expensive for

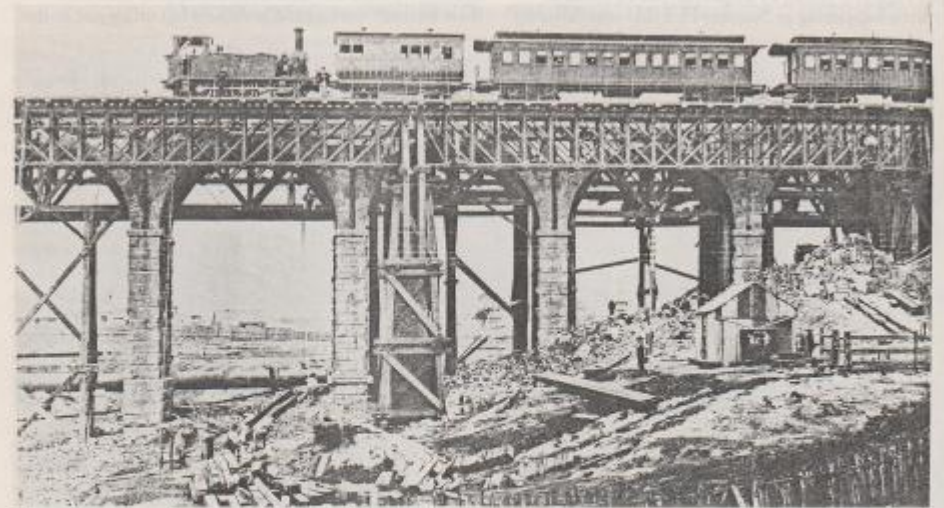
him, with an overtime penalty of £9 a week. All the buildings were supposed to be ready by January 1884, but the two-storey residence was finished in June, the infants building in July and the main building at the end of August. There is also nothing to explain the variation between the instructions given to Kemp in May 1882 and what was actually built at Summer Hill, unless it was that the Department realised the need to plan for the future. What Kemp did was to plan a handsome, symmetrical building with a tower in the centre, flanked on each side by an office and a verandah in front of a large schoolroom measuring 50 feet by 24. At each end of the building there were two classrooms measuring 24 feet by 17½, plus a lavatory or washroom area. A separate building at the rear, connected to the main building by a covered walkway, was set aside for the infants, and included two schoolrooms measuring 34 feet by 24 and a classroom measuring 24 feet by 18. Only the western sections of the buildings, ending at the tower, were built in 1883-84 - the truncated buildings must have looked rather odd - and it was planned to add the eastern sections when enrolments at the school made them necessary.

Thus in July 1884 the infants moved into a schoolroom containing a high gallery of seven forms 16 feet long, separated by a railing from a block of five desks and forms 12 feet long on a stepped floor. This

1883/4 Return for the year ending -
 Summer Hill
 (1883)

Month	Enrolment	Attendance	Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers
Jan	139	106	139	2
Feb	145	110	145	2
Mar	150	115	150	2
Apr	160	120	160	2
May	170	130	170	2
Jun	180	140	180	2
Jul	190	150	190	2
Aug	200	160	200	2
Sep	210	170	210	2
Oct	220	180	220	2
Nov	230	190	230	2
Dec	240	200	240	2
Total	2371	1800	2371	24

The first School Enrolment Form



The coming of the railway meant that Summer Hill was to grow quite rapidly. Summer Hill railway station was built in 1883 - the same year as our school. This photo shows the original Stone arches of Long Cove Viaduct at Leutisham being replaced by an iron structure.

Photo: Mitchell Library.



A rare find – an original Arbor Day, 1890 certificate – Mr T Thoms

economic depression of 1891 hit the colony, and major education reforms were to be delayed until the new century.

On his visit to Summer Hill Carruthers instructed Studdy to obtain more maps and diagrams to hang on the walls, and also to have repaired the many window panes broken over the years by larrikins throwing stones; wire guards were also to be fitted to the windows. Much more importantly, Carruthers decided that the 'temporary' building occupied by the girls was quite unsatisfactory, and instructed the Department to complete the main buildings according to the original design at once. Kemp had the plans ready by April, with an estimate of £3000, but the Department's senior officers recommended that the work be deferred, since Summer Hill did not need extra accommodation.

The Minister disagreed with his Departmental officers, pointing out that the question was not one of increased accommodation at all but of "health and sanitation" in the wooden building, and issued orders that tenders be called late in 1890. To the new building work were added painting and repairs to the older buildings, asphaltting and the connection of the city water supply, and the contract was carried out by Alfred Driscoll of Petersham for the surprisingly low figure of £2857.

Arbor Day

The inauguration of Arbor Day in 1890 was greeted with enthusiasm by the Ashfield district Public School Board, a group of local citizens whose duty it was to inspect and report on the schools in the area. The secretary was Thomas Glassop, Clerk of Ashfield Municipal Council, which had always taken a great deal of interest in the school, partly to ensure that it conformed to standards of municipal pride. In 1883 the Council had issued summonses against the Minister in its successful battle to have the school's partly dug cesspits replaced by the pan system, and in 1886 the Department had agreed to pay one-third of the cost of kerbing and guttering the streets around the school and asphaltting the footpaths. In 1890 the Public School Board was largely responsible for persuading the Minister to replace the "cold, dreary and dirty looking" wooden building.

The Public School Board organised the planting of trees and shrubs at Summer Hill on Arbor Day in August 1890, although Glassop was unsuccessful in his request that the band of the *Vernon* Nautical Training Ship be allowed to entertain the public on the occasion, as it had at Ashfield Superior Public School the

in was designed to accommodate 102 children, and galleried classroom accommodated 54. The piped tent was sold the same month for £10. There had been no separate infants department at Summer Hill in 1883, although the attendance late in the year justified it, and the date at which the department was created is unknown; the first infants dress recorded was Maria Godfrey, appointed in October 1884.

The large schoolroom in the primary department, accommodating 150 pupils, was furnished with blocks, long desks and forms and a gallery at one end, while two classrooms were provided with galleries retaining forms only. The temporary wooden building named on the site, and was soon to be used by a separate girls department; the first girls mistress ordered was Minnie Baker, who entered on duty at the beginning of 1887 and was to remain at the school until 1925.

The School in Operation, 1884-1905

Once the permanent buildings were occupied, Summer Hill settled down to routine operation. Little is ever reported about day-to-day activities at the school, and indeed with the narrow and minutely prescribed curriculum of the nineteenth century, and the performance of the teachers and the progress of the pupils regularly tested by inspectors, there could be very little happening at Summer Hill that was different

from other schools in the colony. The inflexible design and furnishing of the schoolrooms and classrooms reflected the educational philosophy of the time: children were to sit still while being drilled to perfection in the 3Rs, and the curriculum made few concessions to the interests or understanding of the pupils. The arrangement of pupils in classes was based largely on their progress through a series of graded reading books, with the Standards of Proficiency laying down at least one and a half years for each of Classes 1 to 3; Summer Hill, like most large schools, also had a fourth Class in the boys and the girls departments. Fifth Class was generally restricted to Superior Public Schools, and provided an alternative to the few High Schools, of which there were only two in Sydney.

In January 1890 the Minister for Education, Joseph Carruthers, paid a visit to Summer Hill which produced dramatic results. Carruthers was the Minister only from 1889 to 1891, but his period in office coincided with many innovations in education, some of which were his own initiatives. Many of the innovations related to technical education in the very broad sense in which it was then understood, ranging from practical work in kindergarten and primary classes through to the new Technical Education Branch of the Department. Carruthers was personally committed to enlarging and improving school sites and encouraging the development of children's gardens and experimental agricultural plots, and he inaugurated Arbor Day in 1890. He was also anxious to improve school buildings, although his interest was more in their outward appearance than their internal workings. Carruthers left office just as the



The Unfinished School – note the tower. Photo: Mrs J Mulligan

vious Saturday. The Minister believed that the absent presence of the band and its officers from the school would seriously affect the discipline of the ship. The celebration of Arbor Day in 1891 was particularly well-organised, with £15.11.11 being collected in local subscriptions. Over half of this was spent on refreshments for the children, and the balance of the Department's subsidy was spent on trenching ground and erecting and painting guard-fences for trees and shrubs. The day was again a big event in 1892, with five members of the Public School Board present: Mr Formes, Mr Dougan, Mr Dean, Mr Melville and Mrs Ellis.

Summer Hill School
Arbor Day balance sheet, 1891

Particulars	Dr	Cr
To Balance		10 10 0
To Subscriptions		5 15 0
To Donations		1 10 0
To Sale of Trees		2 10 0
To Refreshments	15 11 11	
To Printing	1 0 0	
To Stationery	1 0 0	
To Fuel	1 0 0	
To Repairs	1 0 0	
To Transport	1 0 0	
To Miscellaneous	1 0 0	
To Total	18 11 11	
To Balance		10 10 0
To Subscriptions		5 15 0
To Donations		1 10 0
To Sale of Trees		2 10 0
To Refreshments		15 11 11
To Printing		1 0 0
To Stationery		1 0 0
To Fuel		1 0 0
To Repairs		1 0 0
To Transport		1 0 0
To Miscellaneous		1 0 0
To Total		38 11 11

Arbor Day balance Sheet, 1891

By September 1891 the extensions to the school were nearly completed, and Glassop asked if the Countess of Jersey, the Governor's wife, could perform the grand official opening on which the Board had set its heart. The new rooms were occupied in the first week of October – the wooden building was sold for £40 and carted away – and Lady Jersey performed the opening ceremony on 21 October.

Memorandum from Governor to the Board, 21st October 1891
The Board should be commended for the way in which they have managed the Arbor Day celebration.

I am bound to be content to see you so kindly interested in the interests of the school as to have been so happy to have the noble Countess of Jersey visit the school on the 21st of October.

Yours faithfully,
W. Studdy

Lady Jersey to open the school

It all seemed to be going well at Summer Hill but in fact the Department expressed dissatisfaction with Mr Studdy's performance. In those days the Inspectorial System was harsh and critical. Mr. Studdy replied with vigorous defence, indicating the growth of the school's enrolment since 1883 despite the competition of the nearby schools and the tendency of local parents to send older boys to Sydney Boys High, Sydney Grammar or Newington. In 1892 Studdy was transferred to Windsor and retired in the following year when still in his early fifties.

Frank Garden - The Second Headmaster

For most of the 1890s the enrolment at Summer Hill was well over 600, although it is doubtful if this was the result of Studdy's replacement by Frank Garden rather than the population growth in the area.

Memorandum from Governor to the Board, 21st October 1891
In reference to the Arbor Day celebration

The Arbor Day celebration was a success in every respect, but I should make a few remarks on the way in which it was managed. The school was well supplied with maps and diagrams, and I have no doubt that the children were well instructed in the principles of Arbor Day. The children appear to have been well instructed in the principles of Arbor Day, and I have no doubt that the children were well instructed in the principles of Arbor Day.

I am bound to be content to see you so kindly interested in the interests of the school as to have been so happy to have the noble Countess of Jersey visit the school on the 21st of October.

Yours faithfully,
W. Studdy

A request for maps of America

Garden seemed particularly energetic. He made sure that the school was well supplied with maps and diagrams, and he kept up the Public School Board's good work in planting trees and shrubs by developing flower gardens as well. Like most teachers of his generation, Garden was scrupulously correct and proper in his handling of the regulations and in his correspondence, as he showed in a long memorandum he wrote in 1895:

The Performing Fleas

On several occasions lately I have received applications from individuals to permit the use of portions of the school premises, after school hours, for the purpose of giving entertainments ostensibly for the amusement or instruction of the children, but to which admission is charged, the same being retained by the exhibitor. Permission for these shows is requested on the ground of their being of an educational character. Only one of these persons, (a Mr Howard who has microscopic and other scientific objects to show) can produce any authority from the Department . . .

On Thursday last two men asked to be allowed to exhibit "Performing Fleas"; first, because it was an educational matter and in their opinion quite as interesting as a microscopic exhibition, and second, because they had already shown them in several of the schools in the neighbourhood, after school hours. . . . I submit that it is not fair that I should (because I desire to carry out the regulations properly) be considered over-officious or churlish . . .

The Mr Howard to whom Garden referred had given lectures at Summer Hill some years previously. The Department fully agreed with Garden's views, and was anxious to find out which teachers had permitted such exhibitions, but Garden refused to name them.

Garden established the first Fifth Classes at Summer Hill, in both the boys and girls departments, and in 1894 he asked the Department to raise the school's status to that of a Superior Public School; with 48 pupils in Fifth Class Summer Hill amply fulfilled the regulations. Garden was anxious to discourage the parents from sending the older pupils to Ashfield or Petersham Superior Schools. However, the recent inspection of the school had found the attainments of the Fifth Class pupils "weak" in some subjects, especially the boys department, so the Department deferred the matter.

Extract from Garden's Superior School application

Furniture Problems

In 1896 the infants mistress, Maria Murray, complained that the desks in the original infants classroom were too high for the young pupils. The Department's solution to her problem went further than expected, with the platforms on that side of the room being altered and the long desks and forms replaced by dual desks. This was in keeping with the more flexible furniture demanded by the kindergarten system of education, although the retention of platforms and of the gallery on the other side of the room seriously restricted the amount of movement possible. The beginnings of the move against the old rote system of learning were also evident in the boys and girls departments in 1896, when the galleries in one classroom in each department were rebuilt in order to take long desks as well as forms. This was done because the teachers at Summer Hill, like those at most schools, had found that the limited number of desks seriously affected the amount of writing which pupils could do.

School Concerts

School concerts had always been held in New South Wales schools, but they became much more common in the 1890s with the introduction of Arbor Day, schools libraries, natural history cabinets and other "extras" for which schools had to raise funds. In 1896 the infants mistress organised a Saturday afternoon concert in Carlton Hall, Summer Hill, to raise funds for the purchase of games, a set of garden tools, and other purposes. The concert was so successful that Thomas Glassop, who was the treasurer of the Western Suburbs Cottage Hospital in addition to all his other commitments, asked if the concert could be repeated in aid of the hospital; the Department agreed, provided the teachers were willing to embark on the extra work involved. Minnie Baker also organised a concert by the girls department in 1897, to raise money to form a tennis court at the school. Tennis was one of the few sports played by girls in this period, and most of the physical education received by girls and infants was restricted to drill and to exercises with dumb bells and wands; Summer Hill was well supplied with these items in the 1890s. Boys generally played more sport, especially after the formation of the Public Schools Athletic Association in 1889, but the only boys' sport recorded at Summer Hill during the 1890s was swimming, for which they went to Leichhardt Baths once a week.

Complaints

In 1896 the Department once again expressed concern about the performance of Summer Hill's Headmaster. In that year a parent's complaint about a savage instance of corporal punishment carried out by the first assistant or deputy headmaster led to the discovery that there had been a great deal of unrecorded corporal punishment, much of it for the strictly-prohibited reason of poor schoolwork, like mistakes in dictation. The teacher concerned was demoted and transferred, and Garden was given a serious warning about his supervision of other teachers. In 1897 Inspector Dawson found much to criticise about the performance of the boys at the regular inspection, and also about the distribution of the staff.

On this occasion Garden was cautioned, the Department accepting that the frequent changes of teachers that year had much to do with the state of the boys department. Dawson was again very critical of the examination results and the discipline in 1899 and 1902, and especially of the small enrolment in the higher classes; many boys were being sent to Petersham, although it was badly overcrowded. In 1902 Garden defended himself by pointing out that Petersham was a Superior Public School with a large staff, that many boys in Summer Hill were sent to work as soon as they reached 14, and that many families had left for cheaper suburbs during the previous year or



The public school cadet corps was formed to improve the physical condition of boys, to teach them discipline and patriotism, and to prepare them to bear arms for their country. Most boys and parents (who had to pay for the uniforms) did not share the Department's enthusiasm for the cadet force which was also hampered by a perennial shortage of rifles and ammunition.



SUMMER HILL SCHOOL CADETS, 1895

Photo: Department of Education



Lackey Street, Summer Hill. Early 1900's

Photo: Elizabeth Hoole

vo. He did not mention a significant fact which he had reported in 1900, the opening of a number of small private schools in Summer Hill. Garden was again auctioned.

A letter of complaint was sent to the Department in 1905 and though no action was taken on this letter, when the regular inspection came round in December it was noted that the acting headmaster, Albert Massey, was "effecting improvement". Garden had been on sick leave since October, and was to retire in December at the age of 52.

The New Education

Quite suddenly in 1901 there was an outburst of criticism of the New South Wales system of education as it had developed, or failed to develop, over the previous 50 years. Attendance was irregular, classes were very large, teaching methods were mechanical, the curriculum was a hotch-potch, and the pupil-teacher system produced poorly educated and trained teachers. The year 1904 saw a sweeping series of changes, broadly known as the "New Education". A new syllabus was introduced, which emphasised the correlation of the various subjects and the need to make them interesting and practical. Pupils were to learn by doing and understand what they learned, rather than

merely commit to memory information from a textbook or a teacher. The new syllabus introduced manual training and nature study, and kindergarten work was encouraged. The pupil-teacher system was to be phased out from 1906 and replaced by a proper training system for teachers. All these changes could only be introduced if the traditional buildings were altered, by abolishing the long schoolrooms, stepped floors and inflexible furniture, and replacing them by rooms designed for one class and teacher, with dual desks, or for the youngest pupils, moveable chairs and tables.

It had also been belatedly discovered that nineteenth century lighting and ventilation were quite inadequate. Primary school fees were abolished in 1906, but it was not until 1916 that amending legislation made education really compulsory. Changes in secondary education were also planned in 1904 and 1905 when five primary classes were introduced, with Sixth and Seventh Classes for secondary work, but the major changes in secondary education were to be made between 1911 and 1913.

School records rarely refer to the actual teaching and learning process, and the records of Summer Hill are no exception, so it is impossible to say how the teachers, pupils and parents responded to the principles of the New Education.

The Twenty-One Years of "Boss" Byrnes

It is clear that Garden's successor, Sidney Byrnes, was well able to do so. This is how Dawson, now the Chief Inspector, described Byrnes in November 1908 in recommending his promotion to the Department's highest classification:

"I visited the Summer Hill school on the 29th ultimo and inspected Mr Byrnes' work with a view of testing his claims for promotion to class 1A. The school is in an efficient condition and modern and educative methods are effectively applied. It was with much pleasure that I noted the great change for the better that has taken place in the general condition and tone of the school during the past couple of years."

Byrnes was to remain at Summer Hill until 1927, when he went on leave prior to retirement: Summer Hill thus had only three headmasters in its first 44 years.

Although Sydney Byrnes was the longest serving Principal at Summer Hill and his twenty-one years are recalled by the students of that time, it is the Girls' Mistress, Minnie Baker, who must also be remembered for her remarkable 38 years at the school - 1886 to 1924!

The obvious outward manifestation of the New Education at Summer Hill was the remodelling of the buildings which took place between 1904 and 1913.

As in all old schools, this work was awkward and expensive, particularly because the division of old school rooms and the levelling of floors invariably reduced the number of pupils who could be accommodated. It was fortunate that Summer Hill's enrolment was relatively low in 1904, when there were 518 pupils and each department had four teachers. The numbers were soon to rise sharply.

The first step was taken in 1904, when Maria Murray pointed out that one of the infants' school rooms and the class room had no desks at all, so it was almost impossible to implement the new syllabus with regard to writing in copy-books (rather than on slates which could be perched on the knees) and drawing. Therefore, the floors were levelled in all rooms, the light and ventilation improved and dual desks installed. The work did not include enlarging the windows and replacing the blue glass, and despite Byrnes' protests the school was given long desks again. The old forms from the galleries were converted into playground sea

Later, in 1908, attention was again turned to the infants' department which needed modernising and repairing. But the Department's funds were very restricted at this time so nothing, in fact, was done at all



Class 1 - 1906

Photo: Department of Education



1910-11 Class

Photo: Mrs Bathgat

Largest School in the State?

The enrolment reached 700 in 1908, and by April 1910 it was 740, with a staff of 16. Both the primary departments were overcrowded – at least one boys class was taught in a weathershed – so Inspector Parkinson recommended the addition of a second storey on the end wings of the main building, and the remodelling of the whole school. The sketch plans for this work were ready before the end of 1910, and Parkinson heartily endorsed them. Summer Hill was growing so rapidly that he regarded the work as urgent: "There is no doubt that in the future this school will be one of the largest in the State", he said. The estimated cost was £4600.

But late 1911 the enrolment was 878 and two boys and two girls classes were permanently accommodated in the weathersheds. Parkinson reported that the school now needed six additional classrooms, not four, and urged the Department to act quickly to relieve the overcrowding. The Department of Public Works was finally authorised to carry out the work in January 1913. By then it was beyond doubt that four extra classrooms were not enough, so it was decided to erect a double pavilion classroom building as well. Pavilion classrooms, like the portable classrooms which the Department began using at this time to relieve the accommodation shortage, were cheap and quick to erect. They had an open side fitted with a canvas blind, and were designed in a period when fresh air had become an obsession. They were very uncomfortable and unpopular, and the Department soon had them enclosed.

The main work in 1913 involved remodelling the end wings of the main building in order to remove the porches and entrance corridors and enlarge the old classrooms, and adding two classrooms at each end, on top of the old rooms. Given the rapidly increasing enrolment and the restricted site the second storeys were probably inevitable, but they spoiled the elegant facade of the original building. The windows in the main building and the infants building were reconstructed, the infants hat lobby was extended and new lavatories or washsheds were built in the playground; renovation work and painting were also carried out. The work mainly completed by August 1913, and cost just under £4000. The pavilion classrooms were ready at the same time, and cost £239. The school was supplied with dual desks for some 450 pupils, but most of the furniture did not arrive until 1914. When it did, the 250 children who throughout 1913 had been accommodated in makeshift 'rooms' – the weathersheds and the verandahs, with one class in the open playground – were at last able to settle into modern classrooms.

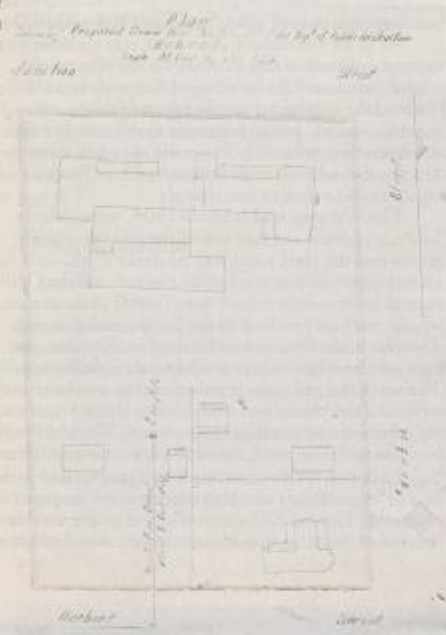
because the Department was still working out the reorganisation of secondary education in the State. Byrnes tried again in 1911, when there were 69 enrollees in Sixth Class and 57 in Seventh Class. Inspector Parkinson was strongly in favour of the upgrading, pointing out that most of the parents were "well-to-do" and hence able to keep their older children at school, and that under Byrnes' good management the school had retained pupils who in the past would have been sent to other schools. The Department again deferred the matter, for the same reason in 1907.

The re-organisation of secondary education had begun in 1910. In that year there were 145 Superior Public Schools and only 5 High Schools. Only 5% of the State's pupils were doing secondary work. In 1911 the Qualifying Certificate examination at the end of the primary course, was established and the number of High Schools was greatly expanded in that year. In 1913 the Superior Public Schools were re-organised. Some offered academic courses designed to prepare students for university and the professions. Three new courses were created: junior technical for boys entering industry and the trades, commercial for boys going into the business world, and domestic science for girls whose future was seen as that of homemakers. Summer Hill was made a Superior Public School at the beginning of 1913, offering the commercial and domestic courses.

The commercial course included the traditional secondary subjects plus a few specially commercial subjects like business principles and bookkeeping, and unlike the junior technical course it demanded no special buildings and little special equipment. The domestic course included subjects like cookery and home management, and in some schools typing and shorthand were also available.

A Superior School

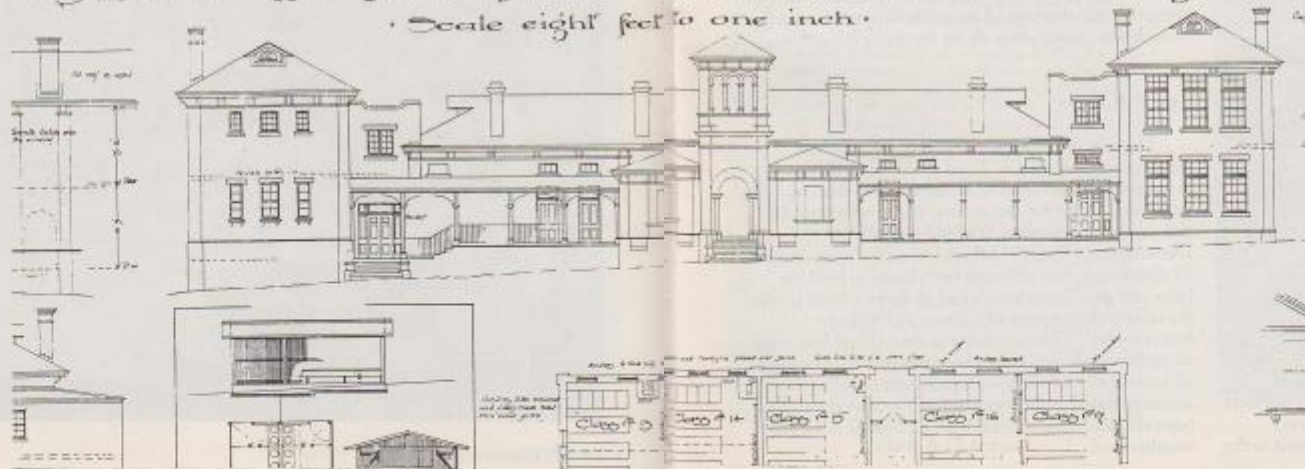
Summer Hill had had secondary classes since 1894, but they had always been small; in 1904, for example, the Sixth Class enrolment was 19 boys and 18 girls. Byrnes put some effort into developing these classes, but found that parents tended to regard Summer Hill as 'inferior' because it was not a Superior Public School. He asked the Department to raise the school's status in 1907, but the request was deferred



Proposed Sewer Plan - 1898

Summer Hill Public School Additions and Remodelling

Scale eight feet to one inch.





Sydney C. "Boss" Byrnes with senior students of Summer Hill Superior School Photo: Irvine Henry Davis (Centre - backrow)

The Successes of Elsie Stephens and Henrietta Todd

While secondary education was developing at Summer Hill, changes were also taking place in the infants department. The vigorous new mistress, Elsie Stephens placed a great deal of emphasis on nature study and excursions, but her special interest was manual work: Parkinson said that the objects made by the infants at Summer Hill were the best both in quality and variety that he had ever seen.

Miss Stephens' work was continued by her successor Henrietta Todd, who was at Summer Hill from 1915 to 1926. In 1915 she asked the Department to supply moveable tables and chairs for the kindergarten room, since the trained kindergarten teacher on the staff found it difficult to implement Montessori methods with inadequate furniture and equipment. Chief Inspector Dawson's note on this request was an ominous "Bring up when the War is over", but the tables and chairs were in fact supplied in 1918 just before the end of the war.

World War 1

The first world war had three main effects on schools in New South Wales. The first was an outburst of patriotism, which was reflected in almost every aspect of school work, from the content of lessons to the

knitting of thousands of socks, and the holding of fund-raising bazaars and patriotic displays. The second was a big reduction in the amount of money spent on education, which resulted in a further check to the building programme, which already lagged far behind the population growth in Sydney before the war. Finally, the enlistment of one-tenth of the Department's teachers resulted in even larger class sizes, and the employment of temporary teachers of widely varying quality. All these effects were felt at Summer Hill, but except for the shortage of accommodation the school's records are almost silent about the war's impact.

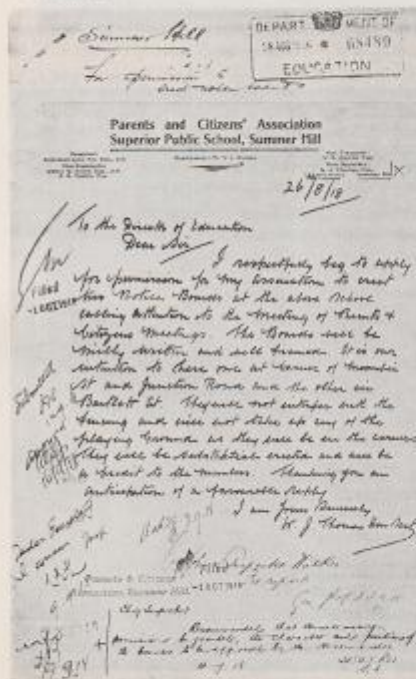
The P & C

The first reference to a Parents and Citizens Association occurred in April 1918, when the new Association urged the Department to provide additional rooms for the infants, but at no other time did any local individual or group write to the Department. From 1917 there were 23 classes and only 19 classrooms, but although two classes in both the boys and girls departments had to share a room it was the infants department which was particularly overcrowded. The five rooms in the old building were all rather small, and throughout this period they were all crowded, while at least two infants classes were accommodated in the weathersheds or corridors. The boys also had their manual training lessons in an open weathershed.



1916 Class 1B

Photo: Mr Edward McClelland



The P & C's first year.



World War I ends - Photo: Alan Spencer

Electric Light

In 1922 Summer Hill had finally reached the category on the building programme, and it was decided to erect the second storey over the central part of the main building, to comprise four classrooms plus balconies and hootrooms.

By 1927 a great deal of work was being done on the residence, including the installation of powerpoints and electric lights to replace the old gas lights. Some electric lights were also to be installed in the school in 1928.

End of an Era

The year 1927 marked the end of an era at Summer Hill. The commercial and domestic science classes were transferred at the end of the year, to be replaced by over 400 new secondary pupils. In May 1927 Sidney Symes left the school after 21 years; the girls mistress Minnie Baker had retired in 1925 after 38 years at Summer Hill, and the infants mistress Henrietta Todd had left at the end of 1926 after nearly 12 years. Both the headmaster and the infants mistress appointed in



Certificate - Mrs Y Ford

1927 were to be replaced at the beginning of 1928, when a new group of first assistants were also appointed, in readiness for the changed character of the school and its promotion to a first class school.



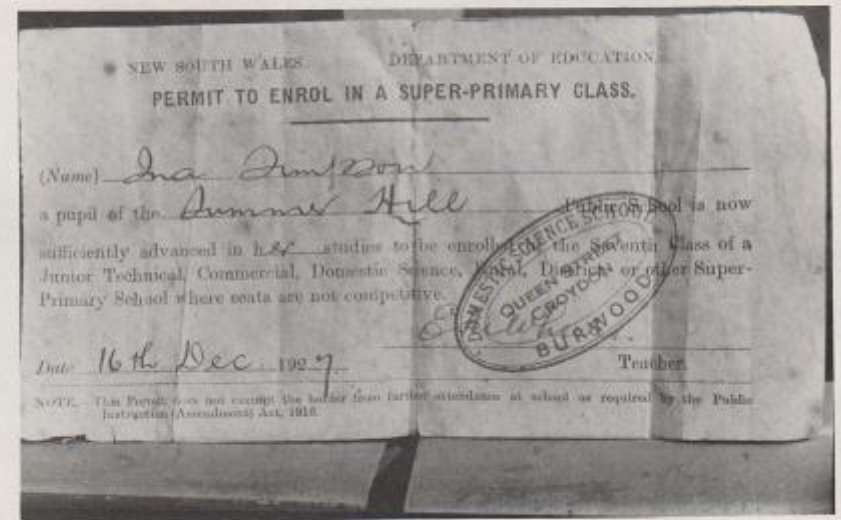
Young Ladies of 1923

Photo: Department of Education



1916 Class

Photo: George Kaufmann



Permit to enrol at Burwood Domestic Science School from Summer Hill.



Kindergarten - 1922

Photo: Mrs Buckley



Class 2A - 1922

Photo: Mrs Lucy Coffill



Class 3 - 1922

Photo: Mr Alan Cavill



Class 3B - 1922

Photo: Mrs Minnie Re



Class 1A - 1922

Photo: Mrs Isa Phi



Kindergarten - 1925

Photo: Mr Stewart Leslie



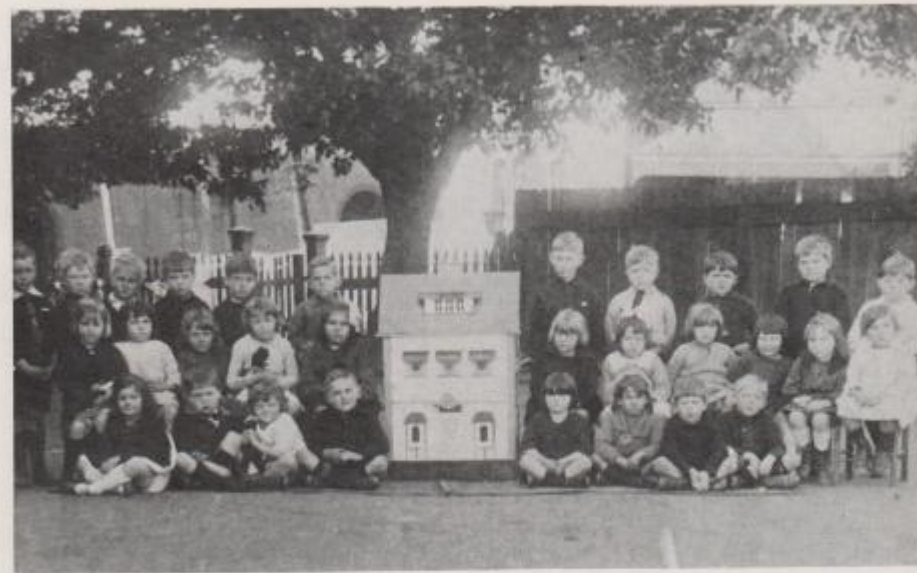
Class 2A - 1925

Photo: Mr Alex M



2B - 1924

Photo: Mrs Hill



DOLLS' HOUSE - 1920

Photo: Mrs Isa Ph



6A - 1927

Photo: Mrs Isa Phillips



BACK ROW:
 1. Phyllis 2. - 23. - 24. Rita Taylor 5. Jean Thompson 6. Eileen Sarntus 7. - 28. Dora Walker 9. -
 SECOND ROW:
 1. Peggy Longford 2. - 13. - 14. Harold 4. Kate 25. Marie Thomas 6. - 26. Judy 7. - 28. Joyce Cooper 9. Frances Cornell
 THIRD ROW:
 1. Joyce Liberson 2. Helen Schmitt 3. - 24. Edna Hight 5. Bessie McPhee 6. - 27. Nancy McDonald 8. Florence 29. - 30. Mable 31. - 32. Joyce
 FOURTH ROW:
 1. - 2. - 3. Jenn 14. - 25. Dorothy 26 - 27. Grace Hakkaroo 8. - 29. Cloris 10. Alma Cook
 FRONT ROW:
 1. Mavis Mearns 2. Nancy Fleming 3. Erid Harbly 4. Phyllis 25 Hope Makin 6. Grace Agnew 7. Dencie Martin.

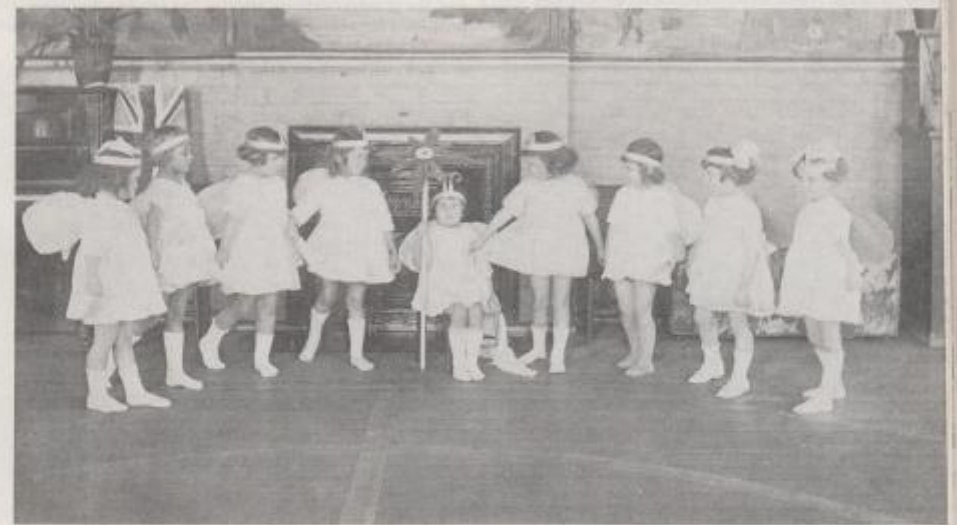
Class 4 - 1927

Photo: Mrs P Mulli



Class 7 - 1927

Photo: Mrs Marjorie Blight



DANCE OF THE FAIRIES

**Intermediate High School,
8-1936**

After the reorganisation of secondary education in South Wales between 1910 and 1913, there was a dual rise in the proportion of children who received at least some secondary education. In 1913 only about 10% of government school pupils were secondary pupils, while by 1927 they made up about 13%. The number of secondary pupils had risen from less than 10,000 to over 40,000. Only about a quarter of these pupils attended separate secondary schools, the remainder being in the intermediate high, district, district rural and superior public schools which formed secondary tops of large primary schools. In most cases this meant rather makeshift accommodation.

A particularly bad example of accommodation difficulties during the 1920's was found at Burwood High School. By 1927 it had nearly 2,200 pupils including 900 secondary pupils. In 1928 it was decided the new building would be occupied by secondary girls only and the 350 secondary boys were to be transferred to Summer Hill. But the erection of two portable buildings did not provide enough accommodation. This became clear even before school resumed in January 1928, when it was realised that the science room would have to be enlarged by incorporating the other room in the pavilion building.

The Department was also aware that the boys' parents were most unhappy at the move from the fine new building at Burwood: "a good deal of public feeling has been engendered", commented the Chief Inspector. It was therefore decided to erect a third portable building, and fortunately all three were completed by the end of January. Shortly afterwards a fourth one was authorised, and it was completed in May.

The influx of secondary pupils had marked effects on the school. There was a sudden jump in numbers –

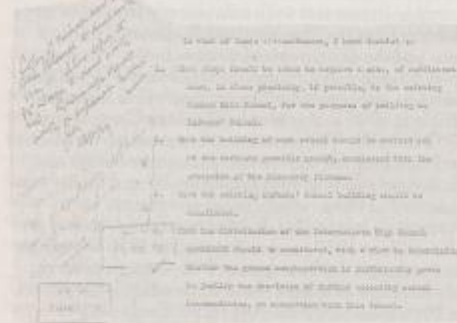
in mid 1928 the average attendance was nearly 1200 – and a marked change of balance between the slowly declining primary and infants sections and the secondary section, which now comprised over 400 boys. The new headmaster, Charles Grassick, devoted most of his attention to the intermediate high school, which was not surprising, but it did lead to some neglect of the rest of the school, and especially of the primary boys. The secondary section had most of the main building while the primary boys were taught in portable rooms (probably because of the "public feeling" already referred to); the reorganisation of classrooms also resulted in the kindergarten and transition classes moving into a portable building. Much of the accommodation at Summer Hill was now unsatisfactory by any standards, and the cluttering up of the small site with portable buildings made the playground very congested. These matters were to be discussed at length between 1928 and 1935, but action was always put off because the secondary boys were only temporarily located at Summer Hill.

The Struggle for Improvements

The Parents and Citizens Association was re-formed in August 1927 after a lapse of some years, and within three months it had 150 members. The secretary, Mr. H. Rofe, immediately set about asking the Department for various improvements, the major items being the reconstruction of the playground and the painting of the buildings. The poor drainage of the site and the gradual deterioration of the asphalt had been problems for years, and a great deal more damage was caused by the trucks delivering the portable classrooms in 1928. Grassick sent the Department several photographs showing the pools of water lying in the playground after rain in 1928.

In May, 1929 the Parents and Citizens, through the new secretary Mr A. Norris, renewed its request

for major improvements to the buildings and playground, while the new Mothers Club, through the president Mrs Walsh and the secretary Mrs Cavill, urged the Minister to erect a new infants building. Things looked more promising in November, when the Minister David Drummond paid a visit to Summer Hill. He decided that the site would be overcrowded even if the secondary boys were transferred and, since the infants building was "most unsatisfactory", a new site should be acquired close by for the new infants building. He also ordered the proper draining of the playground "as a matter of urgent necessity".



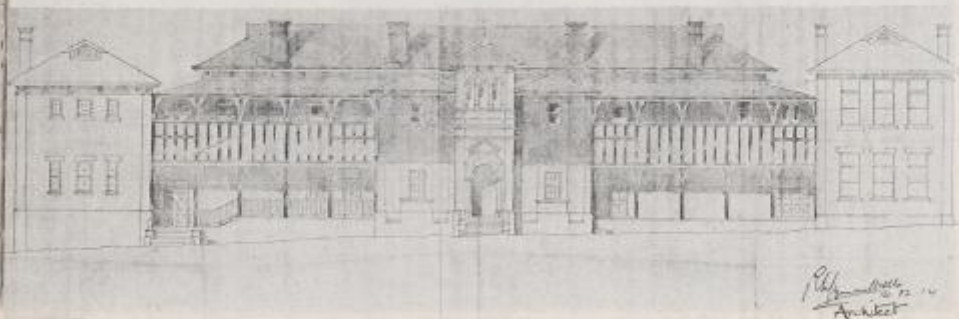
Extract from Minister for Education's letter
The drainage and asphaltting were done in 1930, but nothing came of the other decisions. An investigation late in 1929 found that there was no suitable vacant land in Summer Hill, and the cost of

resuming occupied land would be prohibitive, so it was agreed that the answer lay in the demolition of the residence and the removal of the portable buildings, which would provide space for a new infants building. Any action at all depended on the availability of funds, and the Summer Hill building proposals were to languish because of the onset of the Great Depression late in 1929.

By 1931 it was clear to the Department that the problem of accommodation quantity – if not quality – was being gradually solved by the decline in enrolments.

In 1933 the campaign was revived by the Infants Mistress, Rose Gillies, the secretary of the Mothers Club, Mrs I. Murray, and the secretary of the Parents and Citizens Association, Mrs Vera Black. Their arguments were the same as in 1929, but on this occasion the Department put the whole question of a new building aside because it was clear that once the secondary section was transferred there would be enough room in the main building for the whole school.

It sometimes seemed during this period that no other issue concerned those associated with Summer Hill school. Certainly no one wrote anything about the effects of the Depression on the school and its pupils, and apart from the lack of funds for building the only references to the Depression in the school's records are the files dealing with the dismissals of married women teachers. The school was fortunate to have two parent organisations taking keen interest in the school and raising funds for "extras" through fetes and other time-honoured activities. A Summer Hill Intermediate High School Old Boys Union was also formed in 1932.



Poor Drainage - 1928

Photo: Department of Education



Wanted - a school clock

Summer Hill Primary School

The opening of Homebush Boys Junior High School had been planned for the beginning of 1936, and the necessary staff appointments were made for that time. In fact the new school did not open until May, when the boys intermediate high school at Petersham was closed, but the Summer Hill boys did not move to Homebush until August. Grassick's departure to Manly, which had a large secondary section, was delayed until May, while his successor Francis Byrne arrived at Summer Hill in January. Summer Hill thus had two headmasters for a few months, one in charge of secondary pupils and one in charge of the rest of the school.

The secondary boys left on Friday, 7 August, and over the weekend the Department's workmen moved all the furniture so that the whole school except the kindergarten class could operate in the main building on the Monday.

Francis Byrne - Headmaster of Summer Hill Primary. 1935-1944

The O.C. Classes

From August 1936 Summer Hill had primary pupils only, for the first time since 1913. It also had a limited amount of spare accommodation, which could be expected to increase as the enrolment continued its slow decline. However, if nature abhorred a vacuum so did the Department of Education, and the space was soon to be occupied by 'special classes for gifted children', now known as Opportunity 'C' Classes.

Special classes for gifted children were first established in 1932, at Erskineville and Woollahra. These two schools were chosen because they had spare accommodation and were conveniently located to serve children from the Illawarra and Bankstown railway lines and the eastern suburbs respectively. The first special teacher at Erskineville was Harold Wyndham, who was appointed the Department's first research officer in 1935 and was to be Director-General from 1952 to 1968. The experiment in extending the abilities and enriching the educational experience of fifth and sixth class pupils of outstanding intellectual ability was extended in 1936, when classes were begun at Artarmon. It was also decided to establish classes at Hurstville in 1937, and in September 1936 Wyndham was seeking a suitable centre of the western suburbs. He therefore examined the accommodation left vacant at Petersham and Summer Hill by the opening of Homebush Boys Junior High School, and chose Summer Hill.

Arrangements were hastily made to establish fifth classes at Summer Hill in 1937. The feeder schools were to number 15, including Summer Hill, and extended from Stanmore to Homebush. The classes



Francis BYRNE

Photo: Mrs Wells

were to be accommodated in the "unsatisfactory" old infants buildings, with the partitions in the original schoolrooms being removed but re-used to make a small annex in each room, and the original classroom becoming a library and reading room for both the boys and girls classes. The science room in the pavilion building was converted into a "social room" for plays, debates, and so on. The scheduled removal of the remaining portable building was cancelled and the kindergarten class moved back into it at the beginning of 1937.

In 1938 the original O.C. pupils moved into Sixth Class, and new Fifth Class pupils came to the school. The accommodation was therefore rearranged so that the boys had the old infants building and the two girls classes were located in upstairs rooms in the main building, with the adjoining balcony being glassed in and fitted up as their library and reading room. This created no problems for the remainder of the school, since there had been spare rooms in 1937. The local school population was falling steadily: the enrolment had been 695 in 1935 and was 638 in 1940, but the latter figure included about 140 O.C. pupils, most of them from outside Summer Hill, so the local decrease was about 200 in five years.

The O.C. pupils had a number of advantages. Their classroom space was more generous and better furnished, they had special facilities like the libraries and reading rooms, their teachers were specially chosen

and their classes were markedly smaller - about 35 in each class when the norm was 45 to 48 pupils. They also had more opportunity for excursions and other outside activities, although this was not the reason for the parties given each year by the O.C. girls for the children of Victoria Park Playground in Chippendale. This pre-school centre had been established for the underprivileged children in that area, and in 1937 it was also given a large dolls' house by the infants department at Summer Hill.

World War II

By 1940 Summer Hill was a school of some 650 pupils accommodated in two old brick buildings plus the 'temporary' portable and pavilion buildings. The enrolment and the accommodation were still much the same thirty years later and the headmaster's residence still took up a substantial part of the restricted site.

School life in the forties was strongly influenced by the events of World War II. Students at Summer Hill would remember the "toffee days" and other methods of raising money to help the "War Effort".

Girls were encouraged to knit garments for the soldiers who were fighting in the cold climate of Europe. These knitting sessions produced such items as scarves, gloves and balaclava hats.



Boy on horse

Photo: D D Angus



Class 4 - 1932



Class 3 - 1937

Photo: Mr Kevin King



Kindergarten - 1939

Photo: Mrs Dorothy Carter

During these grim years, air raid trenches were dug in school grounds thus taking valuable playing area away from the children. Trench drill was given regularly with time checks on how long it took the teachers and students to clear the school and reach the safety of the shelters.

It was noted by the Headmaster, Mr. Francis Byrne, that the pupils of Summer Hill played very little organised sport during this period. This was due to

trenches being dug in local parks and the fact that many of the younger male teachers joined the armed forces.

Food and clothing were strictly rationed in those days and could only be purchased in limited supply through the use of coupons. Schools had to struggle to survive with what little equipment they had. Books and paper were in extremely short supply.

The 1940's and 1950's were decades of little change in educational practices.



Class 6B - 1940

Photo: Mr Kevin King



Class 4 - 1943

Photo: Mrs Enid Coombes



Class 3 - 1947

Photo: Mrs P Trinder



Class 2B

Photo: Helen Stymen



TOY SHOW
- 1948

Photo: John Lloyd



Class 6B - 1949

Photo: John Morel



BAREFOOTED SUMMER - 1948

Photo: Mr A B Powell



Pony Ride - Janice Barton's 1949

Photo: Mrs J Miller

The 1950's

Empire Day was still widely celebrated each year but was to decline in importance as the fifties progressed.

All children were given a free, one-third pint bottle of milk each day. This practice was maintained until the early seventies.

Each classroom had a speaker which was connected to a master radio set near the Headmaster's office and pupils listened to Health, Singing and Natural Science programmes. Folk dancing was regularly performed every Friday to instructions given over the radio.

The introduction of black and white television in 1956 was to have a profound influence on the education of future generations of children.



Class 3
1955
Photo:
Mrs. Springall



Cricket Team
1951
Photo: Mrs. Wise



Class 5A
1956
Photo:
Mrs. M. White

The 1960's

The trams which had rattled their way around Sydney for years were being replaced by buses.

The steady influx of migrants in the sixties began to change the way of life. This was the beginning of the processes which were to turn Summer Hill into the multicultural school and suburb it is today.

These times are recalled by Mrs. Dawes-Smith who was appointed to teach the O.C. class at Summer Hill Primary School and is our present Deputy Principal.

In education, equal opportunities for women were introduced into the teaching profession. This saw the appointment of the first women Principals in N.S.W. schools.

The separate girls and boys departments which had always existed at Summer Hill were to disappear with the introduction of co-educational classes.

Ball point pens, at first regarded with some suspicion, began to take over from the steel nib and messy inkwell of former years. Moveable desks and individual chairs replaced the antiquated, wooden and cast iron desks which were fixed to the floor. Lessons became less structured and children were invited to participate more freely in discussion. The "cobwebs" were being blown away!

Australia was changing to decimal currency and the Department of Education produced curricular in Mathematics ("The New Maths"), Social Studies, Handwriting and Spelling.

Reading Laboratories were used to improve the students' reading skills whilst the Library began to become the focal point of the school.

The cost of television sets had dropped and the first black and white set appeared at Summer Hill School. Clerical assistants were appointed to Primary Schools as the sixties drew to a close.



Mrs. Dawn Wilson was appointed to Summer Hill School in 1969 as the first clerical assistant and still holds that position today.



Class 2B
1960
Photo:
Mrs. Trinder



Mrs. Margaret Dawes-Smith has taught O.C. classes at Summer Hill for many years.

Class 6 O.C. - 1969



Football Team
6st 7lb - 1968



Class 2A
1968

Photo:
Mrs. Margaret King

The 1970's

These were exciting years for education in general and Summer Hill School in particular!

By the early 1970's many migrant families had made their home in the Summer Hill area. This caused considerable growth in the number of pupils attending the school. Extra classes had to be accommodated in mountable classrooms as well as a block of flats and houses in Bartlett Street. Four E.S.L. teachers were appointed to the school to assist with the learning of English.

Soon after Mr. Bill Supple became Principal, the school was fortunate to be included in the Disadvantaged Schools Programme. This meant that money was available to fund the purchase of much needed equipment, special programmes and extra staffing - a full time Social Worker, a Remedial Reading teacher and a Library Assistant were

employed. Teachers also started the first After School Care Centre in the area! This funding was to continue until 1982.

In 1977 Miss Vilma Burns, Summer Hill's first women Principal, guided and supervised the building of the new Administration, Library and Infants buildings as well as the refurbishing of the old buildings.

The space and facilities which became available, as accommodation increased, resulted in greater parental and community involvement within the school.

A community "Drop In" centre was opened and parents and community members have been included in curriculum and policy development and classroom activities.



A teacher, Mrs Rilda Blackwood, is shown with a special class. This was the first English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) class at Summer Hill Primary School. Such classes have been helping children improve their English since the beginning of the 1970's. Our school has four E.S.L. teachers at the moment.

the 1980's

1983, the year of the Centenary of Summer Hill Public School, saw the retirement of the popular Miss Vilma Burns in April and the appointment of Mr. John Hathorn as Principal.

With its new and renovated buildings, its additional playing area, its continuing community involvement and its high educational standards, Summer Hill can confidently look forward to its next century.



Miss Vilma Burns
Principal 1976 - April 1983



Mr. John Hathorn
Present Principal of Summer Hill
Primary School



Staff Photo 1983

Back Row: C. Nightingale, J. Bowen, N. Sprague, J. Strahle, D. Carter, P. Metcalfe, D. Johnson, N. Murray, K. Anderson.

Middle Row: T. Gilbertharpe, L. Spindler, A. Crouse, S. Cousins, R. Arhee, S. Howe, P. Shumack, R. Blackwood, S. Tobin.

Front Row: D. Wilson, P. Blaszczynski, W. Atkins, J. Hathorn, M. Dawes-Smith, K. Bockos, M. King.

Down Memory Lane...

In response to requests for information about the former days of Summer Hill School a number of interesting letters have been received and interviews given. Excerpts from these have been included as examples of our living history.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

MR. POWELL has memories about his student days at Summer Hill School during the war years 1914 to 1916. He was recently interviewed by Ms. Therese Gilberthorpe and some of his recollections are recorded below:-

The Headmaster, My Byrnes, had a withered right arm and wrote with his left hand. He had been a pupil trainee teacher and always emphasised the "superior" in the title of Summer Hill Superior Public School. There was no library in the school and the Headmaster lent his own books to the children. Mr. Byrnes' school residence had a wire fence covered in grapes. He told the children that they should not touch those grapes under any circumstances. However, if temptation was too great they could go through the gate, knock on the door and ask his wife for some grapes. No one ever did - possibly because the vines were near the urinals and the boys knew how they were fertilised!

Wartime.

Empire Day (24th May) was always a significant day. The Mayor, or a local dignitary addressed the school on the glories of the Empire; the National Anthem and Advance Australia fair were sung; then the speaker would announce a half - day holiday to a mass of cheers from the children. Everyone was affected by World War I. The teachers and the children were tense and highly strung. Even the name "Kindergarten" above the doorway in the Infants School was erased during the war because of its German connotation. Sometimes, ex-servicemen teachers would behave like drill sergeants. At assemblies the flag was saluted and the names of the dead were honoured. When the names of the dead were announced there would always be much crying. The ringing of the school bell continuously for Armistice created an enormous and lasting impression.

In School.

Of the school itself Mr. Powell remembers that the walls were a dirty green colour, they had tip up desks and some forms had no backs. The No. 9 nibs they had for their pens made good darts if the backs were broken and would stick in the wooden ceiling to later be shanghaid down. Once the Pricipal gave them long handled brooms to clean down the ceilings. Art work at school was very rare and Mr. Johnson was the only teacher who taught art. The children bought Reeves pastels and Lancier or Reeves Drawing Books. Mr. Powell's drawing of a policeman's helmet was displayed on the wall and four years later it was still one of the only art displays on the wall!

Children could pay 6d a week to learn the fife after school. There was a drum and fife band comprising, 20 fifers, 1 base drummer and 2 kettle drummers, and the band led the children into school or into the sports ground.

The children went swimming at Abbotsford. They walked to Haberfield, the fife band leaving them at the station. They took a penny trame fare to Abbotsford, paid a penny entrance into the baths. At the end of the swimming they were ticked off and dismissed. The first time this happened Mr. Powell was quite frightened because he had no idea how to get home.

Games and Books.

Some of the games were similar to today. Children played football or cricket and leapfrog in the yard. They played "Cocky Laura" but it was much rougher in those days for they met in the middle and wrestled in an attempt to stop the other side from getting across.

The books they enjoyed were Film Fun, Comic Cuts, Funny Wonder, Champion Chums and there was a Boys' Own Paper that came out in a weekly edition at 2d. It was part of a "status" game to hold up you desk top and read behind the teacher's back. Once Mr. Powell was mortified to be caught reading a School Girls' Own Library he had borrowed!

Mr. Powell admits there were times when he was terrified of school but says he never felt deprived.



Fife and Drum Band

Photo: Mr. A. Walker

MR CHARLES F WILKINS J.P., a pupil of Summer Hill Superior Public School from 1912 to 1918, remembers both the good and the bad of his school days . . .

'I was a pupil at Summer Hill Superior School from January 1912 to December 1918 and have many memories of that time.

All our family, who lived at 5 Smith St., Summer Hill attended Summer Hill School. There were 7 of us - 5 still alive and all over 70.

Firstly, some of the teachers. There was the lovable, dedicated Percy Williamson, the Deputy, who taught us for the Qualifying Certificate in 6th Class. Hardly ever caned a boy - there was little need because he was respected by even the roughnecks at the school and there were some too in those days! There was a teacher named Fetherston - a lover of the cane and a specialist at the art of hitting the fingertips!

There was also a dear old cove named King, who taught 2nd Class, the lowest in Primary. Others I remember were Mrs. Taylor, Miss Tuesley, Miss Francis; Mr. Beard, who had been to World War I and wounded and discharged early in the war. A Mr. Haydon also comes to mind.

The Headmaster, "Boss" Byrnes, was very much feared by all of the boys. He was a good teacher, paralysed in one arm, but could he lay it on with the other! Looking back I'm sure we followed every word he said, and did our very best to avoid the "sock" as caning was called, (4-6 cuts, mainly 2 for trivialities).

I well remember "Boss" Byrnes assembling the Boys' School and announcing on 4.8.1914, that we were at War with Germany and he really was distressed about it.

Every morning before school we assembled at the flag pole and recited during the War: "I honour my God, I serve my King, I salute my flag". The fife and drum band would play the anthem and we would march to our classes. All children with German names would not be allowed to participate. This applied also to Empire Day, 24th May.

Opposite the school in Junction Road stood Agate's Car works and Sweeney's Car Assembly works were on the corner of Junction Road and Moonbie Street in front of Thoms Galvanised Tank Works. I well remember the first Field Ambulance which was built at Agate's. It had large red crosses on each side and there was much pomp and ceremony when it was handed over to the Army.

In those days the games of marbles and flicking Cigarette Cards were prominent at the school. There was Big Ring, Little Ring and 3 hole marbles with rigid rules, like knuckles up or down and no fudging etc. The Cards from packets of cigarettes in those days were flicked between the fingers from a line drawn to a wall and the closest won. Tops were also favourites and they were spun after being wound with string and thrown in a certain fashion. These simple pleasures created just as much pleasure to us in those days as all the latest electronic gadgets of today.

Billy carts were a luxury and if you owned a gridiron (pushbike) you were a "millionaire". Summing up, it was a school where the standard of teaching was "true to its name, Superior" – the discipline varied from class to class and teacher to teacher – from violent to placid. I still have many happy memories of so many people (many now deceased) and of families all split up to all points of the compass.



P&C Stall during World War I.

*Photo:
Mrs. W. Spence*

(TEACHER 1924-1926) remembers the days at Summer Hill when things were tough, especially for women teachers. For example, there was no equal pay for women. All teachers were paid according to the standard of their exam results but even if a woman came out of College at a higher standard than a man teacher, it was still the man who drew the higher pay!

Following the Great Depression, an Act was passed in 1932 which forced married women to completely leave the teaching profession.

Amenities in the school were sadly lacking – there was no staffroom; no office for Miss Minnie Baker (the Mistress for years); a lot of rooms were temporary and some teachers held classes in the corridor. When a class dropped below 40 pupils a teacher was moved for the staff.

SOME SNIPPETS...

MRS. E. BRIEN (Student 1915-1919) vividly remembers the phrase "I'll take you up". This meant she would be reported to the Mistress.

OLIVE THOMPSON (Student 1909-1912). Empire Day was a picnic at Ashfield Park with a brown paper bag containing a bun, orange and bag of sweets. She also recalls wiping the leaves of the Aspidistras on the verandah each morning.

MR. BILL GOODMAN (Student 1942) is painfully reminded of skinned knees and claims he still bears the scars of battle with loose gravel on the asphalt playground.

MRS. MARGARET KING (Student 1938-1945) is still at Summer Hill School – not as a student, but as a Teachers' Aide.

In her days at school all the girls lined up in the front playground whilst the teachers sternly supervised them from the heights of the verandah.

A Mrs. Jones is clearly recalled. She was very theatrical and loved to perform plays. The children had to supply all the props. When the class was short of a cushion, lamp, vase or other item it usually meant Mrs. King would be sent to get it from her home which was opposite the school.

Her 6th class teacher was Miss Harris who was tone deaf. She would hit a tuning fork on the desk to give the correct note and would sing "me...me...me...me" but each "me" got a bit flatter!

There were four rows of desks and each Friday was rest day. Monday morning's ritual was to re-arrange the seating according to the test results. The best students sat in the row next to the windows whilst those who scored poorly sat in the block near the door.

The students had to buy their own text books but, because money was short, they bought them from those children who were moving up to a higher class.

The girls knitted socks and scarves for the soldiers during the war. Although the boys had sport on Friday afternoons, the girls were denied the same opportunity. Instead they had craft, drawing and painting – eagerly looked forward to because this was one of the few variations from the formal lessons.

Only the boys were allowed to ring the handbell which signalled breaks in the school day.



Mrs. Margaret King today.

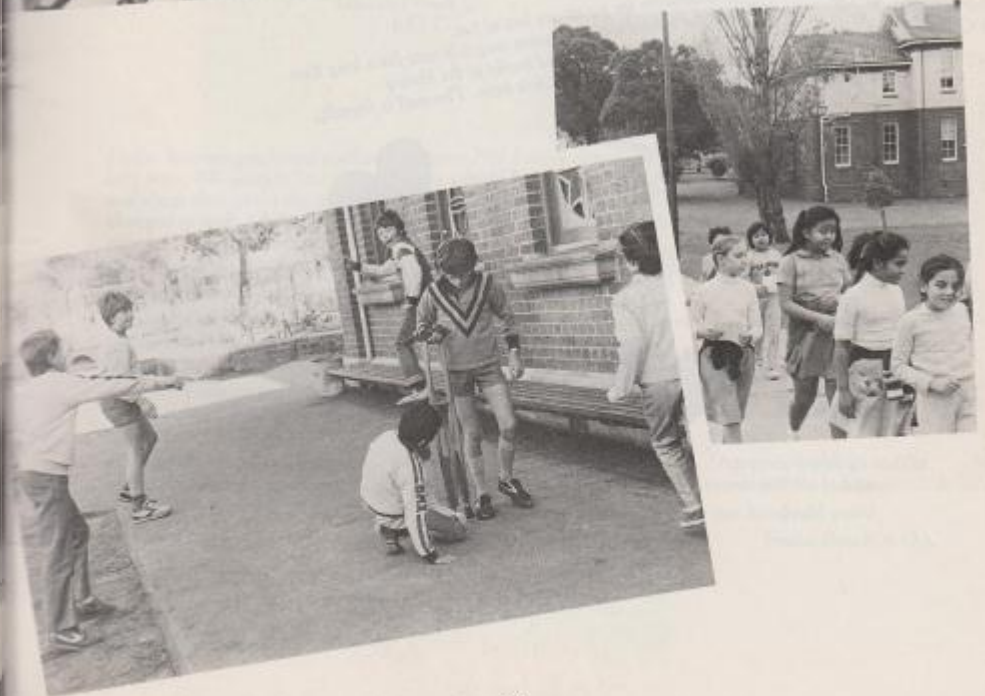
MRS. EFFIE KERR (nee BOWIE) writes of the days 1925 to 1932 and well remembers events in our history such as the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

'I was a pupil from 1925 to 1932 (Kindergarten to 6th class). The "Kindy" teacher was Miss Tynan whom I adored. I took her a flower every day. Miss Shaw was my 4th class "Dragon". The Sewing Mistress taught us to sew a fine seam on samplers and when we were proficient with the needle our first article of clothing was bloomers, hand done!

The Headmistress was Miss B. MacChurcan. She was tall and thin, and wore a ring with a black stone on her right index finger. History was her special subject for our "Primary Final" exam, and if that finger, with the black ring, pointed at you with a question, you knew the answer or else... The Headmaster was Mr. Grassick and never did the two schools intermingle. A high paling fence divided the playgrounds!

Each Christmas, a concert was given in the 6th class room with the dividing partition pushed back between it and the other room to hold the audience. Several girls, including myself, played their best piano piece – classical, of course! I also remember Margaret (Peggy) Christiansen, reciting long pieces she learnt and Elocution. They were always very dramatic and had lots of action.

I was very disappointed not to be included in the group to represent the school on the day the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened in 1932!



I like Summer Hill School because...

Kindergarten

*I like the pictures on the wall and all the paintings and drawings I do. I like work too.
I like building with the blocks.
There are so many toys to play with.*

Year 1

*Our school is 100 years old this year. All the children are kind. I live around the block.
The teachers take the classes out a lot.*

Year 2

I like to draw at school and I like the children you meet and the mothers that you meet.

Year 4
*It means lots of friends and helpful teachers.
It means to learn and to make new friends.*

Year 5

*The excursions we go on are lots of fun.
I hope the school stays the same way it is now for a long time.
There's a large range of good books in the library.
I think you get a good education here. The staff is friendly.*

Year 6

*It has beautiful old buildings.
The teachers make you aware of your environment.
Summer Hill School is one of a kind.
I'm glad Summer Hill School is partly mine.*

Year 3

*It is a public school for everyone.
The rules we have are good rules.*

*These children and their families have shown
a special fondness for Summer Hill School
by helping with the production of this book.*

Alexander Tzannes
Michael Gregory
Vivien Chen
Marc Petrovic



My School

*My school was born in 1883,
A new building,
A patch of playground,
And probably a tree.*

*It's been through hardships,
Joys and tears,
But has kept up its honour,
Through all the years.*

*It's been overcrowded,
And neglected too,
But has always struggled
To be brave and true.*

*So three cheers for our school,
That's 100 at last,
And we hope it will prosper,
As it's done in the past.*

Daria O'Neill
6 O.C.

*I used to be so old and weak
My corrugated iron roofs would leak
My rattling doors would squeak and squeak,
My wooden floorboards would groan and creak.*

*My playground was of mud and sand,
The children were careful where to stand.
Really there was nowhere to play,
So the poor scholars sat around all day.*

*Finally a caring person came
Crying: "Look at this school, Oh!, what a shame!
Why don't we split our money for sharing?
This poor old school needs repairing!"*

*A few months later the workmen arrived
They too, could see that I had not thrived
A short while later I felt fresh and clean,
An incredible improvement to feeling so mean.*

*I now have roofs of dark brown tiles
And sweet green grass that stretches for miles
I have carpeted floors of emerald green
And walls and ceilings all coloured cream.*

*With my tall buildings of sturdy brick,
I never thought I could look so slick.
Trees were planted, the ground was cleared,
I have never looked better in my hundred years.*

Niki Hale.
6 O.C.

Hello, how are you? I am a school, Summer Hill School actually. I've been around for an extremely long time, 100 years in fact; and I've seen a lot of kids, thousand of them. They've changed their ideas and ideals throughout this time, and of course their appearances have changed too. The teachers have changed as well. Oh how I hated it when the swish of the cane rang through the school and the anguished cry of the pupil followed!

However, that kind of thing has stopped now (thank goodness). Instead the teachers just reprimand children and tell them they're being foolish. That's much better isn't it?

I've had plenty of work pinned up on my walls throughout the years, some good some fair but all the children have tried and of course that is what is important.

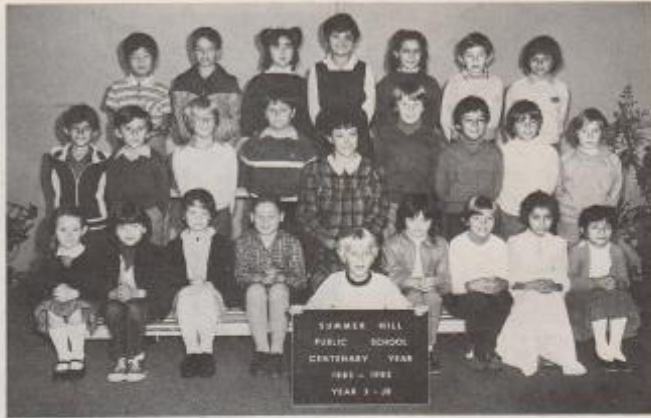
While I've been here people have celebrated plenty of things. Let me see-ooh, there was Federation. They were always talking about that in those days when I was opened. The end of two wars were celebrated too. And of course I remember the first pupils I ever had. I was a high school then and the children were much older than they are now.

Just recently I had a sort of face lift; a lot of money was spent on me to do me up, I have new buildings and the old buildings are made to look a lot better. I felt really good, and I imagine its the same with the kids too.

All of this really makes me proud to be Summer Hill School celebrating my one hundredth year!

Simon Busch. 6 O.C.







Principals and Mistresses

Principal	Appointed
Albert Studdy	1883
Frank Garden	1892
Sidney Byrnes	1906
Frederick Derham	1927
Charles Grassick	1927
Francis Byrne	1935
Arthur Allan	1944
Martin Gibbons	1946
Patrick Callinan	1951
Robert Hill	1952
Francis Simpson	1960
Harold Cairns	1963
Eph Charlton	1965
Cecil Blogg	1971
C.S. Wilkinson	1972
Bill Supple	1973
Vilma Burns	1976
John Hathorn	1983

Infants Mistress	Appointed
Maria Godfrey	1884
Ada Moffat	1885
Maria Murray	1891
Sarah Watts	1905
Elsie Stephens	1912
Henrietta Todd	1915
Edith Starling	1926
Helen Wood	1927
Ruby Willis	1930
Rose Gillies	1932
K. Clarke	1940
E. Balkenburg	1945
C.I. Byrne	1952
M. Straum	1961
K. Kauter	1957
Pat Hemmings	1961
Kathleen Jones	1963
Narelle Watson	1972
Robin Farrell	1977
Wendy Atkins	1979

Girls Mistress	Appointed
(details available up to 1949)	
Minnie Baker	1886
Elizabeth Wheeler	1925
Bessie Maclurcan	1928
Jane Ashton	1932
Ila Fordyce	1936

Enrolment

YEAR	ENROLMENT
1883	371
1884	414
1885	398
1890	568
1895	686
1900	596
1904	518
1910	740
1915	993
1920	992
1925	1073
1930	1348 includes approx. 450 secondary pupils
1935	1095 includes approx. 400 secondary pupils
1940	638
1945	662
1950	700 approx.
1955	650 approx.
1960	527
1965	436
1970	617
1975	712
1980	573
1983	450

