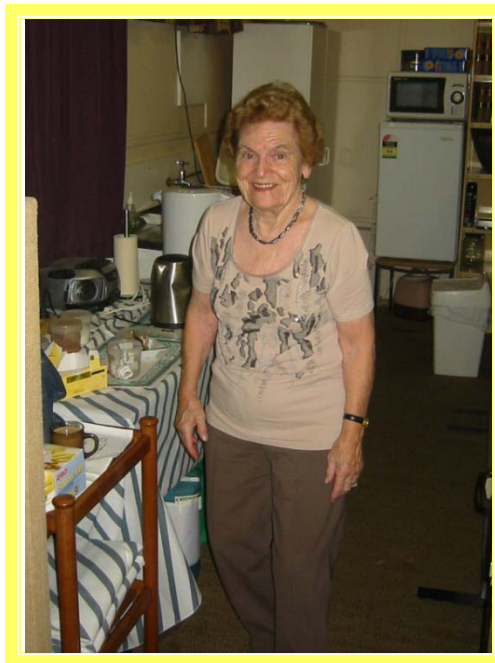


*Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

# **Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.**

(Established March 1977)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and  
Museum and Galleries Hunter Chapter



**Commitment**

**Volume 25, Number 2**

**May 2018**

*The Aims of the Society are to  
Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the District*

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

**Cover:** The photograph was taken by Allan Thomas and shows member and much appreciated volunteer Liz Martin in the kitchenette of the Historical Society rooms.

**Correspondence :** P.O. Box 333, Maitland NSW 2320

**Telephone :** 0438 623 299

**Email :** maitlandhistorical@gmail.com

**Website :** <http://www.maitlandhistorical.org>

**Location:** 3 Cathedral Street Maitland (opposite Bishop's House)

**Lecture meeting** is held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum for lectures, talks and presentations

**Business meeting** is held on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland

Membership fees : \$20 (single) and \$30 (double / family)

**Patrons:** The Hon. Milton Morris AO  
NSW Member for Maitland 1956-1980  
NSW Minister for Transport 1965 – 1975  
The Most Reverend Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

### **Current Office Bearers :**

<b>President :</b> Graham Dark	<b>Vice Presidents :</b> Allan Thomas, Peter Smith
<b>Treasurer :</b> Jennifer Buffier	<b>Secretary:</b> Beverley Bailey
<b>Bulletin Editor :</b> Lisa Thomas	<b>Consultant Editor :</b> Graham Dark

**Bulletin contributions** are being sought. Please contact the Society via email [maitlandhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:maitlandhistorical@gmail.com)

©Copyright. This publication may be used for private study and research. Please contact the Maitland & District Historical Society Inc. regarding any other use.

While every care is taken in the compilation and editing of the information contained in this bulletin, Maitland and District Historical Society Inc. and its editors do not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information

## **The Maitland and District Historical Society 2018 AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the Maitland and District Historical Society was held on Tuesday 20 March. At that meeting the following office bearers were elected:

President: Graham Dark

First Vice-President: Allan Thomas

Second Vice-President: Peter Smith

Secretary: Beverley Bailey

Recorder: Ruth Trappel

Publicity Officer: Chas Keys

Bulletin Editor: Lisa Thomas

Technical Officer: David Atkinson

Committee: Tom Skelding, Janece McDonald

Public Officer: Kevin Short

The Maitland and District Historical Society would like to acknowledge the contributions and accomplishments of out-going President Keith Cockburn and Curator Adele Cockburn, who laboured tirelessly in support of the Society.

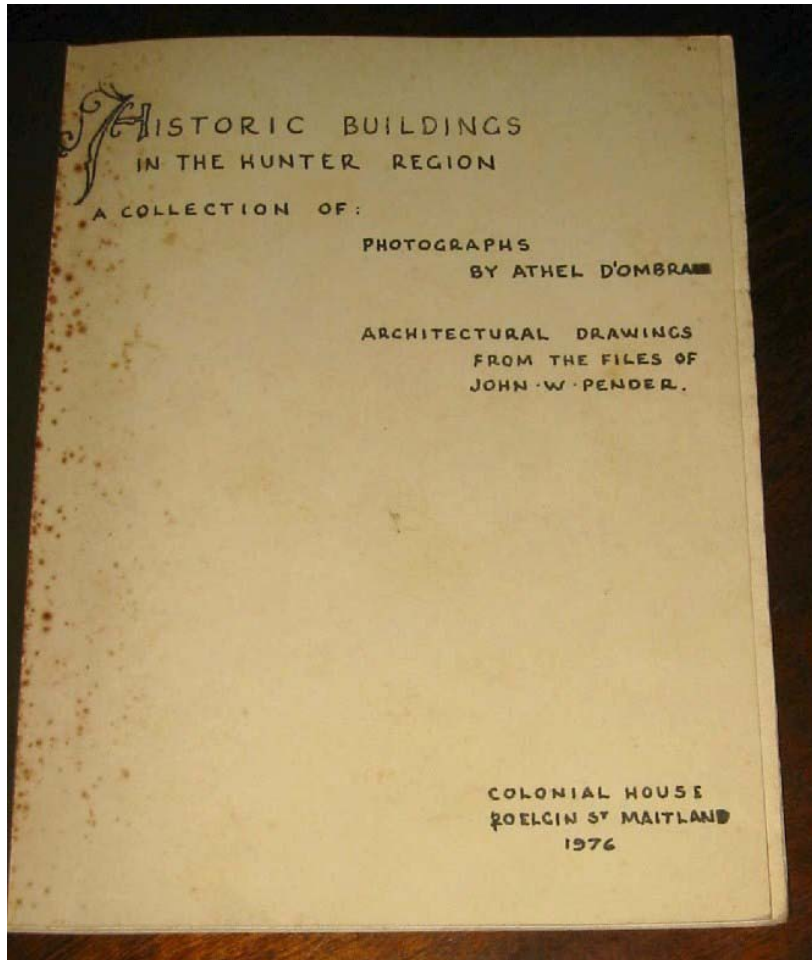
+++++

## **Celebration**

Allan Thomas cuts his birthday cake in the Society rooms as photographs of early Maitland notables look on. Helping him celebrate are (l-r) Kevin Short, Keith Cockburn, Graham Dark, and Val Rudkin. Photo by Lisa Thomas.



## **Athol d'Ombrain in 1976**

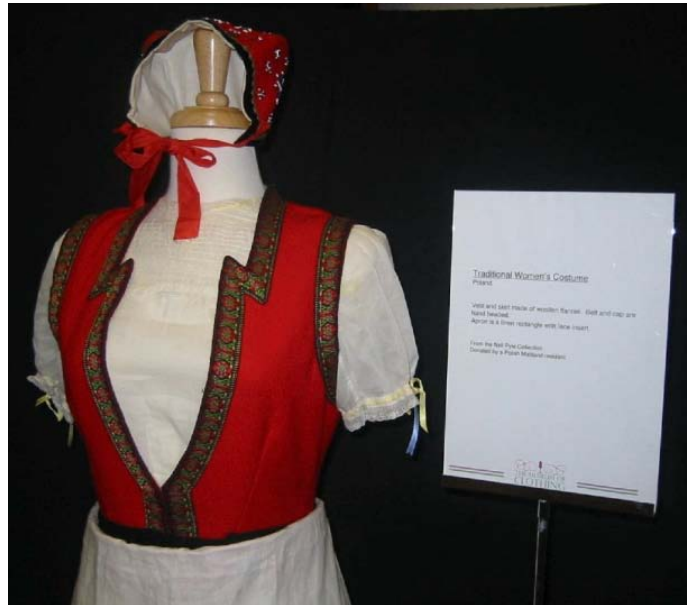


This image is of the cover of a booklet which was recently purchased at Cook's Hill Books in Newcastle. This booklet is from a 1976 exhibition and sale of Athol d'Ombrain's photographs of historic Maitland area buildings. Although no photographs were actually reproduced in this booklet, Athol described the subjects and added his comments regarding their historical importance. Does anyone recall this exhibition?

+++++

## **Costumes on Exhibit at Brough House**

The following photograph is of a traditional Polish woman's costume, one of a number on exhibition at Brough House from the Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles (AMCAT) collection. This particular costume is courtesy of Nell Pyle.



+++++

*The following article is a combination of memories of her early school years and research into the early history of Maitland Public School by Valerie Rudkin. It will undoubtedly resonate with those who attended Maitland Primary School, or whose family members attended that school. Ed.*

## **But Old Maitland Primary Stands Out From the Rest**

By Valerie Rudkin née Beavis

*Remember the days of the old school yard...*

The song written and sung by Cat Stevens certainly revives memories.

*We used to laugh a lot, oh don't you  
Remember the days of the old schoolyard  
When we had imaginings and we had  
All kinds of things and we laughed  
And needed love ... yes, I do  
Oh and I remember you*

My name is Valerie Beavis and this song came to mind, when I turned the page of my photo album recently and looked at my Grade 1 school photo.



*The Infants' School of Maitland Primary School where my school days began.  
Demolished 1965*

We all have a class photograph or two which remind us of our youth and those who shared the experience of our schooldays. Being able to remember all the names on the photo is a challenge. Why do we remember the other children? Was it something about them that made them special? Perhaps it was just that in the early days of our education, we were recording items to memory apart from the three R's.

When I looked at my Grade 1 photograph, that memory stored so long ago started to emerge and I was surprised as the names of the girls came to mind. Some were a little obstinate but even without trying, over a few hours to a few days they had emerged from the deep, all except one.

School began for me at the start of 1945 when I was five. My mother elected to enroll me at the Maitland Infants School in Olive Street as my two older sisters were students nearby. June was at the girls' high and Noelene at the public school across the road. Most children who lived at Lorn attended Nillo Infants School, so I was a bit of an exception.

School was different. It ended the days of doing mostly what I wanted and was permitted to do into days of doing as the teacher instructed. This was not a problem as I recall, because I don't remember much about being in class at all. I have a few early memories, and recall that Mum delivered me to school on the back of her bicycle and on one occasion we arrived so late that classes had begun. Mum left me at the gate and rode away, and there I stood lost and bewildered and began to cry. A kind teacher found me and led me to my class. So all was well.

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

Another memory was being chosen to be “Spring” in a Kindergarten play. My role was to stand on a chair wearing a long dress and sing a little song. I am sure my singing voice was not the reason I was given the role but more because of my sausage curls.

Being the youngest of three girls in our family, I had little association with boys. I remember one boy at infants school who met with my approval. I now wonder if David remembers his neat appearance and knee-high socks. David probably does remember the pupils standing in the playground on Empire Day for the formalities which had something to do with Queen Victoria and then being given a half-day holiday. Lucky children celebrated that night with family gatherings around a bon-fire and the lighting of some fire crackers. This earned the celebration the title of ‘Cracker Night.’

My Grade 1 photo (1946) is a bit puzzling as it is a class of girls and I don’t remember being in a segregated class. On contacting David Sciffer, he said he does not have a school photo for that year and can’t recall being segregated from the girls. David does remember Miss Stenhouse, the headmistress and that he and the other boys called her Miss Henhouse behind her back.



Are they?

Back l-r:

Jean Miles; Olga Knight; Noreen Beal; Wendy Compton; Judith Newton; Pamela McGee  
Centre:

Eileen Threlfo; Barbara Bailey; Barbara Connelly; (unknown); Betty Folas; Valerie

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

Beavis; Edith Pillidge; Frances Chapman

Front:

Grace Buxton, Gwenneth Gray; Maureen Jones; Nola Howard; Shirley Gamble; Fay Hickey; Julie Henderson

When Maitland Public School celebrated One Hundred Years of Education 1874 - 1974 a booklet was produced in recognition of this achievement, it is dated 4th - 5th October, 1974 and contains the following statements.

“In the establishment of the first public school in West Maitland there was no single more important factor than the denominational opposition to it. Maitland public school was conceived and brought forth in the period of controversy over who would ultimately control education in New South Wales - church or state.”

The history of Maitland Public School was written by Mr. J. J. Fletcher, Research Officer, Division of Planning at the Department of Education 1974 and he states:

“To comprehend the events in Maitland in the 1860’s and 1870’s it is essential to know the history of attempts to establish a comprehensive system of education in the colony to meet the needs of a population which was spread thinly over a very large area (from Moreton Bay to Port Phillip) and consisted of four major denominational groups.

From the very early days of the colony, schools had been financed from public money but the churches had invariably been responsible for supervising them and determining the course of instruction. In those days education which was non-religious was absolutely unthinkable.”

Fletcher’s history of the school is well documented and forms the basis of this potted history. The Maitland Daily Mercury newspaper published an informative article on 7 December 1939 which is reproduced here.

**“Began in 1872”**

**“West Maitland Public School”**

**“Interesting History”**

The history of the West Maitland Public School dates back to the year 1872, when the application for a school was made to the Council of Education on June 4 that year. The application was signed on behalf of the local committee by Messrs. Isaac Gorrick, W. Briggs (secretary) and R. Blair.

The reason for the application was the claim that there were 2000 children residing in the locality, and the probable enrolment was 490. At this point in time the educational requirements were being met by five schools of various religious denominations, but there was strong agitation for a public school.

The local committee gave a guarantee that a third of the building cost would be raised through local subscriptions and this was a condition for the establishment of a school under the old Public Schools Act of 1866. This act was not abolished until 1880.



## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

The establishment of a Public School received strong recommendation from Mr. Inspector J. D. Bradley, the local inspector of schools and it was approved by the Council of Education the same year.

The next step was to purchase land on which the school building could be erected. This was obtained from Mr. James Wolfe for the sum of £400, plus £200 for a supply of stone that was on the site. The building cost £968 to erect and the work was efficiently carried out by Mr. A. Pritchard. The residents of Maitland contributed one-third to this amount. On August 5, 1873 the foundation stone of the building was laid by Sir Henry Parkes and the day had been proclaimed a public holiday in West Maitland. The first headmaster appointed was Mr. Joseph Coates, who opened the school in April 1874. The inspection report in December 1874 showed the school was divided into three departments, boys, girls and infants, with a total of 470 children and 355 present at the examination. The inspector stated that the school was well conducted and the pupils were clear, intelligent, happy and well behaved.

Proof that a Public School was indeed needed was provided with the erection of additions costing £886 made by the original contractor, Mr. Pritchard within a year of having opened. Further additions and improvements were made over time, but eventually the school fell short of the education requirements. There was agitation for better and larger buildings to meet the needs of the children of the town by local bodies and this led to the Hon. W. Davies, M.L.A., Minister for Education, setting the stone of a new building in Elgin-street on October 3, 1927.

Educational progress was witnessed with the introduction of the commercial and domestic science courses in 1914 and in 1926 the junior technical course was added.

It was during these years the school was made a central school serving the requirements educationally not only of Maitland and district but also for the children who lived as far south as Hexham, north to Singleton and Dungog, and also to Kurri Kurri.

In 1937 technical classes were established at Singleton and boys attended from the stations as far as Branxton.

The transfer of over 300 girls from the Domestic Science section of the school to the Maitland Girls' High School dropped the status of the school from a first-class school to a second-class school. With the extension of the educational advantages to Kurri Kurri and the introduction in 1940 of Third Year classes, the enrolment of the Junior Technical portion of the school was slightly lessened.

The boys at the Junior Technical School advanced as far as the Intermediate Certificate Examination. During the first year the general course consisted of English, mathematics 1 and 11., history, commercial geography, science, business principles and book-keeping, cardboard work, technical drawing and music was followed.

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

In the second year two courses were followed - one a commercial course, designed for boys who anticipated taking up a business career, the other was a technical course for boys who wished to enter the trades. The two courses took the general subjects but the commercial course continued business principles and practice and added shorthand, whilst the junior technical course continued with woodwork and technical drawing with metalwork added. These two courses were followed during the third year.

The boys who passed their Intermediate examinations and desired to further their studies were able to do so. The boys who studied commercial subjects were able to attend the local boys' high school and the technical boys were able to continue at Newcastle.

When this article was published the staff consisted of Mr. M. G. Hobden, Dip. Ecs. (headmaster), Mr. C. McKenzie (first assistant of the boys' primary), Miss I. Morris (mistress of the girls' primary) with Miss I. Casey as first assistant, and Miss E. Grace in charge of the infants, and twenty-two assistants.

The closing words of this article are "The school has a fine record, many who now hold responsible positions in Australia having received their early education there."

### **The trials of married women teachers**

The infant schools had female teachers both married and single. In 1932 the passage of the Married Women (Lecturers and Teachers) Act provided for the dismissal of young married women on permanent staff whose husbands were in employment. About 600 women teachers were retrenched between 1930 and 1945. The measure was intended to allow more men, particularly returned servicemen, to be employed. The provisions of this legislation continue to be applied into the 1940's when war-time manpower restrictions forced a relaxation of this policy.

At St. Ethel's Public School four married women teachers were compelled to resign in the period to 1939. The feelings of resentment and frustration that women teachers must have felt at the injustices of this Act are seldom recorded, though the letter written by the Infants Mistress, Eileen Ridley, appealing against her dismissal in August 1932, expressed the feelings of most. Her letter was reproduced in the St. Ethel's Public School Centenary Book, 1882-1982.

Many female teachers remained spinsters, having to make the difficult choice of career over marriage and children. Some may have lost their sweetheart in the second war and being a teacher helped their life to go on.

The Newcastle Teachers College was opened in 1949. It followed that of Balmain, 1946 and Wagga Wagga, 1947. The Newcastle College was later incorporated into the University of Newcastle.

## **Moving up**

By the time the Newcastle Teachers' College opened we pupils of Maitland Public School had moved up and over to the Primary School. Another photo taken of Class 3A in 1948 carried many of the same names as 1946 but here are distinct differences in that the boys are included and our numbers had increased by additions from other infant schools. The photographer managed to get us all to smile, some did so shyly and others offered a smirk. Only one pulled a silly face and surprisingly a female.



Back 1/r (*with assistance from David Sciffer*)

Robert Parsons; Allen Walker; Tony Semit; Phillip Clappen; Warren Turner; Warren Cliff;  
Cliff Hawkins

2<sup>nd</sup> Back

David Sciffer; Ted Hawkins; John Price; Geoffrey Pritchard; Jane Sippe; David Rourke; Ray  
Ross; Stuart Allomes

2<sup>nd</sup> Front

Betty Richards; Valerie Beavis; Pamela McGee; Ruth Yates; Elsie Gaynor; Barbara Bailey;  
Shirley Gamble; Jean Miles; Elizabeth Folas

Front

Frances Chapman; Robyn Moore; Fay Hickey; Marilyn Dawson; Barbara Connolly; Enid  
Groves; Grace Buxton; Gwenneth Gray

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

Another photo from my Maitland Primary School days, is my Grade 6 photo. In that year the girls were segregated from the boys so instead of 6A and 6B we had 6<sup>th</sup> Boys and 6<sup>th</sup> Girls. No explanation was given to my knowledge. There are 44 girls in that photo, a large class and I can't name them all.



Here is my list left to right, please correct me if I'm wrong!

- Front: Maureen Martin, Ena Groves, unk, Gwenneth Gray, Marilyn Butler  
Front 2: Ruth Brown (kneeling) Shirley Gamble, Robyn Moore, Dale Threlfo, Marilyn Dawson, Nola Howard, unk, Margaret Hedges, Laurie Bonser (kneeling)  
Middle: Valerie Beavis, Grace Buxton, Fay Hickey, Barbara Connolly, unk, Barbara Campbell, Edith Pillidge, Dorothy Kennedy  
Back 2: Patsy ?, Lenore Hazlewood, Margaret Grainger, Valda Sorrenson, Ruth Butler, Noreen Beal, Betty Folas, Betty Richards, Jane Sippe, Robyn Fry, Loretta Black, unk  
Back: Pamela McGee, Jeanette Ostinga, unk, Barbara Bailey, Judith Willis, Judith Newton, unk, unk, Diane O'Brien, Elsie Gaynor

The experts say it is better to take a digital photo of a photograph than to use a scanner. That is alright if you have the expertise. I have to apologise for the photo above being a bit askew due to my lack of skill. Putting all the names to the photo is a real challenge. Names float around in the mind and may be from a later year. If any reader is able to assist please contact

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

the Society so the correct name can be recorded. My apology to those who are among the unknown.

The photograph by Chisholm Studios, Maitland.

There were general stores near the school. One stood on the corner of Olive and Elgin Streets and another a few doors along in Olive Street which was owned at one time by Ron Walsh. Ron Walsh became well known as a Councilor on the Maitland City Council and served as Mayor 1979-1983. The Kaluda Café on the corner of Church and Steam Streets and also on Church Street the fish and chips shop of another Maitland Councilor, Fran Dawson. Fran was elected in 1962 and served 21 years on the council.

I look back on those years with a lot of satisfaction. As students we were instructed and encouraged by our teachers, Miss Volmer Grade 3 and in particular Mr Bennett in Grade 5 to learn and improve. Everything that happened was under the watchful eye of Mr. Roy McIntyre, Headmaster.

### **Maitland Public School Timeline: [Sourced from the history by J. J. Fletcher.]**

This list of West Maitland Schools' 1872 Enrolments shows the establishment of church based schools in West Maitland by 1872. The name of each school with the number of enrolments in brackets.

St. Mary's (146) St. Paul's (104) St. John's (371) Presbyterian (92) Wesleyan (149)

The figures were sourced from the Report of the Council of Education, 1872. It should be noted that St. John's large enrolment was due to it containing three school departments which operated independently of each other, a girls', boys' and infants' department.

The movement for a public school at West Maitland received support from many local businessmen, including Samuel Owen who travelled to Sydney to meet with William Wilkins, the secretary of the Council of Education. On Samuel Owen's return he stated the Council still owned a site in Hannan Street granted in 1851 to the Board of National Education and the Council was eager to assist. A public meeting was set for 26 March, 1872. (page 7) (*An Agricultural School was conducted in Hannan Street in earlier years.*)

However, when the Maitland Mercury announced the date of the public meeting, protests broke out and the newspaper became a forum of debate by those for and against the proposal. (page 8)

William Briggs had an answer to the question of the public school being detrimental to the denominational schools - he agreed. In his opinion, if a public school could close down inefficient denominational schools it would have educational benefits for West Maitland. He argued that one large public school which absorbed all the denominational schools would

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

save on salaries. (page 9)

There was a fly in the ointment in regard to his theory. Catholic policy expressly rejected any such merger of Catholic schools and public schools, and that Anglican practice in West Maitland had been to retain its own schools as far as possible. If none of these schools closed, then the cost of a public school building would have been an additional expense. (page 9)

- 1873 *5 August, laying of the foundation stone by (Sir) Henry Parkes who positioned the time capsule in the space beneath of a bottle which contained a copy of the Maitland Mercury of 5th August 1873, coins of the realm and a copy of the addresses given to Henry Parkes by the East Maitland and Morpeth public schools.*
- 1874 *13 April the new school opened as West Maitland Public School  
17 April the enrolment was 127 boys and 62 girls  
8 May the enrolment was 174 boys and 84 girls*
- 1874 *May, new school building officially opened by Professor John Smith of Sydney University, president of the Council of Education, and Sir Alfred Stephen, a member of the Council of Education, and late Chief-Justice of New South Wales.*
- The inspector for schools announced that “a superior Public School of three departments had been established in West Maitland. By March 1874 more than half of the new school had been completed.
- 1875 Additions to the original building carried out by the contractor, Mr. Pritchard. *Possibly the Infants’ Department erected in 1875 in Olive Street.*
- 1890’s The depression during these years led to many schools becoming more progressively dilapidated and West Maitland was in a bad state of repair and needed new buildings to accommodate its 800 pupils. Some parents felt forced to remove their children from the school due to these inadequacies.
- 1900 More than £3000 was spent on upgrading the school’s accommodation with major repairs and renovations being carried out and a new two-storey building erected to house the girls’ department. The building was of four rooms, two on each floor and measured 37 feet (11.2776 m) x 25 feet (7.62 m) and able to accommodate approximately 100 pupils per room. It carries the year 1899 on the Church Street elevation.  
*(This building is considered to be the first half erected of the large brick school on the corner of Church and Olive Streets.)*
- 1912 Again additions were carried out with some remodeling but local residents were agitating for a complete new building as the only answer to the school’s accommodation problem.
- 1920 The original school buildings considered to be close to the end of their useful life.

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

- Some relief was found through the school using the technical college buildings. This was a temporary measure.
- 1926 Late this year a tender was accepted for a new building for the boys' department, large scale additions to the girls' and infants' buildings. Remodeling of the old building used by the boys to form a manual training room and science laboratory. The teacher's residence was converted into a home science unit - cookery room, laundry, sitting room and bedrooms with administrative and staff offices being added. The total cost approximately £15,500.
- 1927 New building erected. During this period West Maitland was still a Superior Public School providing both secondary and primary education for over 1000 pupils. In the secondary field it offered a commercial course and technical course for boys and a domestic science course for girls.
- 1930's During this period West Maitland Superior School changed its secondary function by transferring its domestic science girls to the girls' high school at Maitland at the beginning of 1939.
- 1943 The commercial and junior technical boys were transferred to the boys' high school.  
The removal of the older girls and boys left the school as a primary school as it had been in 1874.
- 1949 The 'West' was dropped from the name and the school became Maitland Public School.
- 1951 What, all girls (again)? 6<sup>th</sup> Class was segregated in 1951, Instead of 6A and 6B .
- 1960 More than 650 enrolments.
- 1965 The infants' school buildings were demolished.
- 1973 Enrolments number 470
- 2018 It is interesting to note the buildings of the present school are a mix of the old and hold 144 years of history within the walls. Whilst the demolition of the old infants buildings was sad for me it is great to see that other buildings are constantly being recycled and performing new services to the school curriculum.

When Pender Place was established as a shopping centre it removed the street that connected Church and Elgin Streets. The street was Scotia Street and it contained an old church hall which may have belonged to St, Mary's. This hall was used by the Maitland Girls' High School as an assembly hall and for physical training when the weather kept the class indoors. Another classroom that still exists is the single building in the grounds behind Grossmann House and I remember it being part of the high school 1952-1954.

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

### References:

Title - *But old Maitland Primary stands out from the rest* - is the second line of the school song. The words written by A. J. Bradbury. Alfred J. Bradbury, teacher appointed 24 May 1955.

*The Old School Yard* Writer: Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc. BMG Rights Management US, LLC Lyrics licensed and provided by LyricFind. Recording by Cat Stevens released 1977

*Maitland Public School Centenary of Education 1874-1974*; held in the Maitland & District Historical Society collection and recommended reading.

*Maitland Daily Mercury* 7 December 1939 Article on West Maitland Public School obtained from Trove <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article> 127488729

Dismissal of young married female teachers c.1932 From *St. Ethel's Public School 1882-1982 Centenary Book* held in the Maitland & District Historical Society collection

Picture of the original Infant Department building in Olive Street. Erected 1875 reproduced from page 5 of the publication "Maitland Public School - Centenary - 1874-1974"

The three buildings that appear in this photograph all formed part of Maitland Public School. The two buildings of the Infants' Department in the foreground and the obscured former Teacher's residence on the left which was remodelled in 1926 to become the Home Science building. All these building were demolished in 1965 and the area now forms part of the school playground.

Class Photographs from the collection of Val Rudkin (née Beavis)

+++++

*The Maitland and District Historical Society Inc. has a number of publications for sale at the rooms at 3 Cathedral Street Maitland. For details of the publications for sale, or to purchase, please visit the rooms during open hours on Wednesday and Saturday between 11 AM and 3 PM.*

*Alternatively, contact the Society on 0438 623 299 or email [maitlandhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:maitlandhistorical@gmail.com).*