

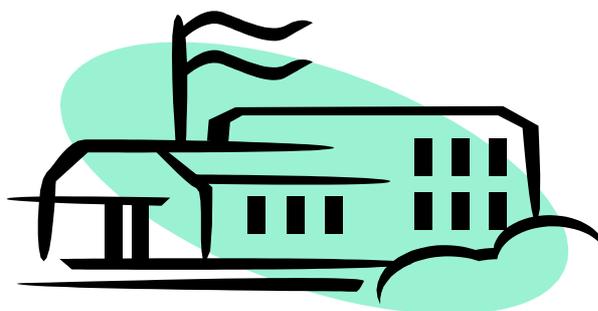


# WERRIBEE HIGH SCHOOL

THE STORY OF WERRIBEE HIGH SCHOOL AND OF  
EARLY STATE EDUCATION IN WERRIBEE.  
WRITTEN TO COMMEMORATE THE OFFICIAL  
OPENING OF WERRIBEE HIGH SCHOOL BY

THE HON. J.S. BLOOMFIELD, M.L.A.  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

18 MARCH 1961



## II. THE FIRST WERRIBEE SCHOOL

On 18 December 1858 the National Schools Board established Wyndham School with John W. Baker as teacher, his salary was £125 a year.

Here is a simple picture of this school in 1860, exactly a century before the first full year of Werribee High School in its newly constructed buildings.

	Boys	Girls	Total
Enrolled	17	23	40
Average daily attendance	10	13	23
Average daily attendance			58 per cent

Amount paid by each child for books during the year:

(a)	based on number enrolled	1s. 11d.
(b)	based on average daily attendance	3s. 4d.

Ages of children enrolled:

Age	Number	Age	Number
3 years	4	10 years	4
4 years	4	11 years	2
5 years	6	12 years	3
6 years	4	13 years	2
7 years	5	14 years	1
8 years	1	15 years and over	1
9 years	3		

Board of Local Patrons

R. Heath	Storekeeper
E. Armstrong	Innkeeper
J. Kelly	Farmer
P. Kelly	Farmer

### III. WERRIBEE COMMON SCHOOL

In an attempt to create greater efficiency in administration, the Common Schools Act, effective from 1 September 1862, replaced the Denominational and National Schools Boards with a single system of Educational administration. Wyndham School became Werribee Common School.

### IV. STATE SCHOOL No. 649, WERRIBEE

The Common Schools Act failed to make any appreciable extension of the benefits of State-aided education, and as late as 1867 less than half of the 170,000 children of educable age in the elementary schools of Victoria actually attended school. The movement for a sound and economical system of education led to the Education Act of 1872 which made elementary education compulsory and established the Education Department presided over by a Minister of Public Instruction responsible to Parliament. Under this new Act, which introduced a new era in education in Victoria, all children between the ages of 6 years and 15 years were to attend school on at least 60 days in each half-year.

After the three weeks Christmas Vacation, the Werribee School opened on 13 January 1873 as State School No 649. The payment of a fee on each Monday morning was no longer required of the pupils, though instruction could be obtained in extra subjects where parents were able and willing to pay for the instruction.

### V. WERRIBEE HIGHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As late as 1905 the Education Department had only one secondary school, but educational thought was moving for the establishment of a system of State secondary schools. The Education Act of 1910 provided for the establishment of higher elementary schools and district high schools with the dual object of bridging the gap between elementary education and the university and providing facilities for further education for all children of ability irrespective of the financial and social status of parents.

The higher elementary school was a primary school with a secondary top, to enter which the intending student had to pass the Qualifying Certificate, taken in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, normally at the age of 12 years. The four-year secondary course led to the Intermediate Certificate of the University of Melbourne. The course of study allowed for different courses for different types of pupils, viz., general secondary, commercial, domestic and agricultural, but in practice most children were channelled through the general secondary course.

The secondary section of the higher elementary school aimed at giving a good general education to fit each young person to play his part in a modern democracy, training for his future life as a worker, and training for the right use of leisure.

On 3 December 1920 the Minister of Education, the Hon. Sir Alexander Peacock, approved of the establishment of Werribee Higher Elementary School, and the school was proclaimed as from 1 January 1921.

On the left-hand wall at the front of S.S. 649 in Deutgam Street there is a foundation stone which reads:

This Site Presented  
By  
G.T. Chirnside, Esq.  
School Officially Opened  
12.9.19

This would seem to indicate that the primary school moved from across the Werribee River in 1919. Pending the erection of extra accommodation required for secondary education, the secondary classes commenced in 1921 in leased premises (the Mechanics' Hall and later also the Church of England Parish Hall).

On May 3 1923 the Minister of Education, Sir Alexander Peacock, officially opened the Higher Elementary School which, with the later addition of other specialist rooms, forms the present State School No. 649.

The establishment of a secondary school imposed several obligations upon the local community, including a grant of land and a contribution of money. The first condition had already been met by Mr. Chirnside's donation of 5 acres bounded by Wedge, Deutgam, Werribee and Pyke Streets. Now Mr. Chirnside (remembered in our Chirnside House) contributed £1,000 spread over 4 years. The right-hand foundation stone facing Deutgam Street reads:

Foundation Stone Laid  
By G.T. Chirnside  
October 17, 1922

In 1921 the Higher Elementary School opened with 62 secondary pupils of which 53 came from the township and 9 from outside (Metropolitan Farm 4, Tarneit 3, Little River 1 and Laverton 1). During the year 20 scholars left, many because they 'could not stand' the bicycle ride in winter, and some because of the need to go to work to supplement the family income.

The school began its second year with 73 pupils (Werribee 63, Tarneit 4, Metropolitan Farm 3, Werribee South 2 and Little River 1), and three secondary classes, Forms F, E and D (now Forms I, II and III). An Intermediate Certificate class was added later.

The school progressed. Up till the creation of Werribee High School, material additions included a prefabricated cookery centre, an art room and, not least, a corrugated-iron 'army hut' refitted as a modern library, a delayed response to Mr W. Carter's magnificent gift of £500 to establish the Carter Library.

During the early 1950's the Secondary Board of Inspectors and the staff began to describe the accommodation problem as acute. Moreover, students still had to proceed to Melbourne to undertake the last two years of secondary education – Leaving Certificate and Matriculation studies. By 1955 the time was ripe for the establishment of a district high school in its own buildings and in its own grounds. A 10 acre site of market garden land on Duncan's road had already been acquired.

## VI. WERRIBEE HIGH SCHOOL

In preparation for the gazettal of Werribee High School on 1 January 1956, the Education Department in 1955 constructed on a new site a three roomed aluminium prefabricated building designed for the future teaching of woodwork, metalwork and mechanical drawing. Mr. G. Morris, who had twice served as Senior Master in the secondary section of the H.E.S., returned to Werribee as first Head Master.

Even if some high school lessons were taken at Duncan's Road, other general lessons and art, science, woodwork, metalwork and cookery were required to be taught in the specialist rooms a mile away in S.S. 649. The Head master thereupon entered into an agreement with the Head Teacher of S.S. 649 – Mr A.L. Godfrey, who was the last Head Teacher of Werribee Higher Elementary School – by which all the high school classes remained at S.S. 649 and three primary grades transferred to the buildings on the high school site. As accommodation difficulties increased at S.S. 649 the Education Department leased the older of the Church of England parish halls and in 1959 both halls.

Foundation members of Werribee High School staff were:

George Morris (Head Master), St.J. Eric Bryant (Senior Master), Miss M. Bullen (Senior Mistress), Allan R. Lake, Brian Kann, G.P.T. Sweeney, Miss O.J. Bevan, Miss S.M. Jennings, Miss C. Venville, Mrs F.I. Hayes (part time), and Miss M.L. Smart (Secretary).

Mothers began their able, earnest and highly valued work for the school with the formation of the Ladies' Auxiliary, of which the foundation office bearers were: President Mrs J. Philippe, Vice Presidents Mrs L. Brighthope, Mrs S. Nevitt; Secretary Mrs W. Lloyd; Treasurer Mrs E. Gome. The Auxiliary was formed in November 1956. During the earlier part of 1956 the Mothers' Club of the former H.E.S. acted for both schools.

The Advisory Council took office on 1 July 1956. The District Inspector and the Head Master jointly appointed Messrs J. Forrest, O. St J. Kent, C. Semmler, A Raw and S.S. Searle to represent district interests, the Werribee Shire Council appointed Cr. T.G. Beasley as its representative, parents elected the Rev. L.H. Rye, the Rev. D.T. Pritchard, and Messrs. K. Hayes, N. Minns and H. Lowe as their representatives, and Mr J. Crocker took office ex-officio as District Inspector. The Head Master took office as Secretary.

Even a bare outline of the work of the Advisory Council in its four and a half years of office suggests the wide range of the Council's interests: development of grounds, maintenance of buildings, provision and insurance of equipment, acting to gain an adequate water supply, the annual parent-teacher evening, the safety of children on Duncan's Road, fund raising activities, extension of the school site area, and right from its first meeting, work for the erection of the present buildings.

The Ex Students' Association came into being on 11 September 1956. First office bearers included Alwyn Nutter (President), Lorraine Stuart, Helen Dimmick, Margaret Hayler and Tim Mentha. Now that the school has settled down in its new buildings it is expected that there will be a revival of ex student activities. The snow trip to Mr Donna Buang (with no snow but much mud) will long be remembered.

It would be a valuable exercise in historical study for some of our students to compile a detailed history of Werribee High School during its first five years, using original records. At the moment we can but glance at some points of interest.

The year 1956 saw the establishment of Form V, and for part of the year the students undertook their Leaving Certificate studies seated at a small table in a crowded locker room. From Form III upwards the school curriculum was developed in three streams – academic, commercial and domestic. The first fete returned about £80. The first Speech Night, held in the Palais Theatre, was graced by the presence of Dr J. Darling, Head Master of Geelong Church of England Grammar School, as first Guest Speaker.

One of the first acts of 1957 was the establishment of two new Houses, Kent, named after Mr O. St. J. Kent, first President of the Advisory Council, and Morris. In their first days the new Houses were never quite a match for the famous Wyndham and Chirnside Houses which had existed since the early days of the H.E.S. Many organisations joined in a tree planting ceremony at the Duncan's Road site. Mr Arthur Storey and his sons Colin and Geoffrey did much of the work of preparation, and later Mr Henry Bugg spent much time in caring for young trees. Mr Len Grant kindly lent equipment. The Storey and Henry Bugg Avenues of trees met sad times, but they will be restored to full glory. The first annual parent teacher evening of films, music, talks and discussion was a great success. The Commonwealth Employment Service provided the guest speakers. The Port Phillip Secondary Schools' Sports Association, including Bacchus Marsh, Queenscliff and Werribee High Schools and Daylesford Technical School and H.E.S., came into being. With Werribee High As host school, the Association held its first athletics meeting on 30 October.

On 10 December 1957 the Minister of Education, the Hon. J.S. Bloomfield, M.L.A., accompanied by Mr G.R. Crick, M.L.A., and Mr R. Rawson, M.L.C., visited Werribee so that the Minister might receive a deputation from many district organisations concerning the need for the erection of high school buildings at Werribee. Mr S.S. Searle and Mr H.L.B. Powell presented the case for the deputation, after which the Minister inspected the secondary accommodation at S.S. 649 and the high school site at Duncan's Road.

The second annual speech night took place at the Mechanics' Hall with Associate Professor Kathleen Fitzpatrick as guest speaker. Professor Fitzpatrick expressed a desire to return as guest speaker in the year in which matriculation studies were commenced at Werribee High School.

Two main events occurred in 1958. Werribee High School became a school in Class A, that is, it gained approval for the awarding of the Intermediate Certificate on the results of internal examinations. In Term III the construction of a concrete veneer, light timber frame building began. These buildings represent Stage I and a modified Stage II. As the school grows Stage III and Stage IV will be added.

Mr Richard McGill became Head Master on 1 January 1959. He planned the transfer of the school to the new buildings which the pupils occupied for the first time on 8 September. The Ladies' Auxiliary established a canteen in temporary accommodation, and steps were begun to acquire an Air Force hut, 60 ft x 20 ft for use as a permanent canteen and lunch room. The speech night was held in the school quadrangle.

At the beginning of 1960 the High School was elevated from a Class II classification to Class I and Mr G. Morris returned as Head Master. The year was one of great difficulty in staffing. The annual parent teacher evening, to a large extent planned by Advisory Council member Group Captain David Colquhoun, introduced parents to techniques for increasing reading efficiency. Wing Commander L.A. Greenaway, the guest speaker, returned to the school in December as guest speaker at the speech night, again held in the quadrangle.

At the commencement of 1961 Mr A. Byrnes, District Officer of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, arranged the siphoning of the irrigation channel at the front of the school, leaving the way open for the beautification of the school entrance, the construction of a bus loading bay and the bringing of the canteen building into the school grounds.

On 18 March 1961 in the presence of students, their parents, staff members and friends of the school, the Minister of Education, the Hon. J.S. Bloomfield, M.L.A., accompanied by the Director of Education, Mr A. McDonnell, B.A., B.Sc., B. Ed., officially opened the school.

## EPILOGUE

In all this history the dates and facts do not tell the whole story. We must see beyond them to catch a glimpse, if no more, of the energy, effort and foresight of the men and women who brought the Werribee schools into existence and who, by their continued devotion to the cause of education, developed them. To these people, no matter how humble their work, must go our thanks for *making* history. The story told in these pages may not mention their names, but it is nevertheless their story.

Records a century and more old have been used in the compilation of this story. Let us record some information for those who in the future may be interested in our school as it is now. Has the school any matters of great concern? The school is very interested in the provision of an adequate water supply and in the provision of housing in order that senior staff will come to Werribee and render service to the school and the community for many years.

The school expresses its thanks to the Education Department, the Public Works Department, the Werribee Shire Council and other public bodies for kindly help given over the years.

## STAFF 1961

### HEAD MASTER

George Morris,	B.A., B.Ed, TPTC, Dwight's Prizeman in Education, Melbourne University	
Alister Clarke	B.A., B.Ed., TPTC	Senior Master
Miss O.J. Bevan	B.A., Dip. Ed.	Senior Mistress
R.L. Smith	B.A., Dip. Ed.	
W.T. Cook	B.Sc., TSTC	
W.G. Wigg	TSTC (Commerce)	
A.M.C. Parkin	TSTC (Science)	
J.F. Teague	TSTC (Arts and Crafts)	
R.G. Falk	B.A., Dip.Ed	
I.R. Bowen		
A. Lee	L.R.S.M. (London), B.A. (Melb.)	
Miss Margaret Goulden	TSTC (Arts)	
Miss Lorraine Fry	TSTC (Arts and Crafts)	
Mrs M. Smith	B.A., Dip.Ed (Liverpool)	
Mrs D. Walker	(Faculty of Agr.Sc., Melb. Univ.)	
Mrs G.C. Mackie	TCC (Dom. Arts)	
Mrs F.I. Hayes		
Mrs M. Linke	B.A., STC (Western Australia)	
Mrs M. McKeown	TPTC (Adelaide)	
Miss Elizabeth Powell		

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Stephen Stenning Searle	C.E., A.M.I.E. (Aust)	President
George H. Howard	TPTC	Treasurer
W.I. Young	B.A., B. Ed., (D.I.)	
Rev. L.H. Rye	M.A.	
W.I. Young	B.A., B.Ed.	
A. Byrnes	B.Agr.Sc., A.M.I.E. (Aust), E.W.S.	
A. Raw	M.Agr.Sc	
Neville Hudson		
N.G. Minns	F.I.M.A.	
Kenneth Hayes		
D.R. Myers		
Cr. H.L.B. Powell		
Group Captain D.L.G. Douglas	O.B.E., D.F.C.	

### LADIES AUXILIARY

President:	Mrs A. Barber
Vice President	Mrs F.H. Williams, Mrs R. Smith
Secretary	Mrs B. McNaughton
Treasurer	Mrs O. Trigg

### GROWTH OF THE SCHOOL 1956 – 61

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>1956</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>1957</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>1958</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>1959</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>1960</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>1961</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>478</b>

### ENROLMENT 1961

<b>FORM</b>	<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22 (22)</b>
<b>IVA</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>IVB</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30 (55)</b>
<b>IIIA</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>IIIB</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43 (88)</b>
<b>IIA</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>IIB</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>IIC</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>IID</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>46 (156)</b>
<b>IA</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>IB</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>IC</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>41 (157)</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>478</b>