

EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL
MAY, 1981



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CANCELLED

EMPIRE BAY
PUBLIC
SCHOOL
CENTENARY



1881 — 1981

PREFACE

This booklet has been produced on the occasion of the Centenary of Empire Bay Public School.

The members of the Organising Committee are:

C. Marshall (Chairman)
L. Allsopp
V. Anderson
K. Davis
T. Greenish
R. Haddon
S. Hochberger
P. McGann
J. Quirk
B. Waters

The Committee wishes to acknowledge its gratitude to all those who have contributed information and photographs.

LB

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SCHOOL DIRECTORY 1981

PRINCIPAL

MR. J. E. DEASEY, B.A. Dip. R.E.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

MRS. R. McNAB

STAFF

MR. W. COLLIER, MRS. R. McEWIN, MRS. J. RINGUET,
MS. I. VIETS, B.A., MRS. T. DONALDSON, B.S. Ed., MISS M. MARSH
MR. K. VALLIS, MRS. A. YEATS

PART-TIME STAFF

MRS. R. BROWN (Craft), MRS. M. DARBY (Library)

ANCILLARY STAFF

MRS. D. ROSS, MRS. H. HIND, MRS. S. BERDON (Part Time)

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

A Centenary is surely a time to reflect, a time to reminisce, a time to plan. It is a time when the past is particularly relevant to the present and there is a merging of past achievements with present endeavours; we build upon that which has already been achieved.

From a humble beginning much has been achieved over the period of 100 years. Our School's name has changed from Cockle Creek to Davis Town to Empire Bay and the new has replaced the old.

A glance at the history of the school's beginnings and development shows the important part played by the local community and the P. & C. Association. We may recall the past teachers of the School and as well the fellow pupils of past years, the voluntary help provided by parents and as well the contribution made by the Education Department.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to all those people who have shown so much interest and given so much of their time and energy in helping to prepare for this occasion. In particular, I am grateful to all members of the Centenary Committee and P. & C. Executive, staff and pupils and all others who have contributed to the success of this Centenary Celebration.

J. E. DEASEY,
Principal

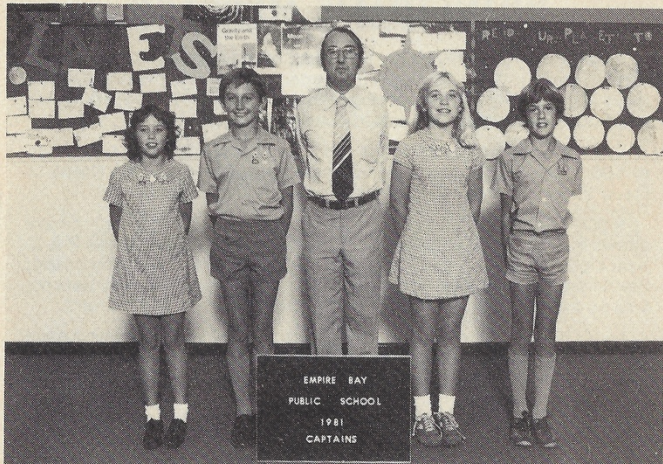
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EMPIRE BAY SCHOOL STAFF 1981

BACK ROW (L to R): Mr. T. Reynolds (M.C.A.E.), Miss M. Marsh, Mr. W. Collier, Mrs. A. Yeats, Mr. K. Vallis, Miss R. Bartlett (M.C.A.E.)

FRONT ROW: (L to R): Mrs. D. Ross (Clerical Assistant), Mrs. H. Hind (Teachers Aid), Mrs. R. McNab (D.P.), Mr. J. Deasey (P), Mrs. R. McEwin, Mrs. T. Donaldson, Mrs. J. Ringuet, Absent Ms. I. Viets



SCHOOL CAPTAINS AND VICE-CAPTAINS 1981

(L to R) Karen Byrnes (Vice-Captain), Stephen Marshall (Captain), Mr. Deasey, Tracey Graves (Captain), Jason Oliver (Vice-Captain)

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ANNEX TO APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL AT COCKLE CREEK.

We, the undersigned, Parents (or Guardians) of children residing within the undermentioned distances from the site of the proposed Public School at Cockle Creek hereby undertake that our children, whose names are inserted below, shall attend the said school.

Name of Parent or Guardian	Distance from School	Name of Child	Age
Edward Beattie	1 mile	Edward Beattie	12
		Angus Beattie	10
		Walter Beattie	8
		Ernest Beattie	6
		Angus Beattie	4
		Leslie Beattie	
James F. Merrett	1 mile	James Merrett	13
		Frederick Merrett	11
		Sarah Merrett	9
		Eleanor Merrett	7
		Harry Merrett	5
		Gertrude Merrett	3
William Riley	1 mile	Sarah Riley	13
		Margarit Riley	9
		John Riley	7
John Murray	1 mile	Sisselia Riley	5
		John Murray	13
		Sarah Murray	11
		Mary Murray	9
		Alfred Murray	7
Jas Mullins	2 miles	Patrick Murray	5
		Kate Mullins	13
		Telina Mullins	10
		Lydia Mullins	8
Thos. A. Palmer	½ mile	Lucy Palmer	9
		Alice Palmer	12
		Daniel Palmer	7
		Henry Palmer	5
		Robbart Hughes	6
Catherine Hughes	¾ mile	Celia Hughes	4
		Albert Settree	13
Alfred Settree	½ mile	William Settree	10
		May Settree	8
		Alice Settree	6
		James Murray	
		Sam Murray	
Patrick Murray		Emily Woodward	5
		Jeanett Woodward	3
William Woodward	1 mile	Lowyven Barrett	11
		Rick Barrett	9
		Abgil Barrett	5
Rick Barrett	¼ mile ?	William Barrett	5
		John Sheiles	8
		Anne Sheiles	11
		Cecelia Sheiles	13
		Benjamin Sheiles	12
William Sheiles		Giles Jenkins	7
		Margaret Jenkins	5½
		Emily Jenkins	4
		Ellen Jenkins	4
Giles Jenkins	½ mile	Edwin Flekner/Osborne	6
		A. G. Flekner	½ mile

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A SHORT HISTORY OF EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

THE FIRST MOVES:

On 10th June, 1879 a group of residents of Cockle Creek and neighbourhood applied to the Council of Education for the establishment of a Public School. The Council of Education, which ran the government schools of New South Wales from 1867 until the establishment of the Department of Education in May, 1880, would open a Public School in a particular locality if a minimum average attendance of 25 was guaranteed. The local committee set up at Cockle Creek comprised Alfred Settree senior, shipowner; Alfred Settree junior, shipbuilder; James Merritt, storekeeper; William Riley, shipbuilder; and Thomas Palmer, shellgatherer, who undertook the responsibility of being secretary to the committee and correspondent with the Council of Education.

In 1879 there were approximately 50 children of school age living within two miles of the proposed site, where the school stands today. Very few of these children had ever been to school. Kincumber Public School six miles away had first opened in 1870, but only the Settree family found it possible to send their children there, irregularly. The nearest school to Cockle Creek was Blackwall Provisional School, opened in 1872 and situated south of Blackwall Point and west of the Rip. For the children of Cockle Creek, it involved a journey of one and a quarter miles by land and then one and a half miles by water. The enrolment at Blackwall in 1879 was only 14, and when the leading resident there heard of the Cockle Creek application he informed the Council of Education that it would not be worth keeping Blackwall open if a school was opened at Cockle Creek. The result was the closure of Blackwall in July 1879 — even though it was to be nearly two years before Cockle Creek Public School was opened.

Given the difficulty of overland travelling in this area and period, the usual visit and report by the district inspector, based in Newcastle, was done instead by Inspector Bridges, based in Sydney: he travelled by the steamer "Pelican" from Sydney to Blackwall, which allowed him to spend three or four hours at Cockle Creek and return to Sydney by steamer the same evening. Bridges made the trip at the beginning of October, and found a permanent community of some 150 people at Cockle Creek, mostly freeholders. He had no hesitation in recommending that the government be asked to grant the suggested two acre site, and that a weatherboard schoolroom to accommodate 50 pupils with a teacher's residence attached be erected.

APPLICATION GRANTED:

The Council of Education formally granted the application on 17th November, 1879, and applied for the site early the following month. At this time the Lands Department had a huge backlog of surveying work, and the Council of Education had therefore debated whether to save time by buying the block offered by William Riley. It had decided against it because the block measured only one acre and also because of the cost of sending a special surveyor from Sydney. Its forebodings were justified, for the Crown land sit was not granted until February, 1881.

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APPLICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL AT Cockle Creek
14.6.79 Post Town, Kincumber
 Date, June 10th 1879

The undersigned on behalf of the residents at Cockle Creek and neighbourhood hereby request that a Public School may be established at that place, under the provisions of the Public Schools Act.

Local Committee...
Alfred Settree Senr
Alfred Settree Jr
James Merritt
Will^m Riley
Thos Palmer

BRANCH B.
14.6.79 Sec by pro tem
 Appl. entered. P. of A.S. sent to Mr Thos Palmer. P. of A.S. B. 14
 Adv. 19.6.79
13.4.81 to Mr L. Gazette. P. of A.S. to Thos Palmer. P. of A.S. to Comptroller
 Established 17.11.79
79-21181 20.11.79
13.20.25

Handwritten notes on left margin:
 Council
 14.6.79
 15.5.81
 16.11.79
 17.11.79
 19.6.79
 13.4.81

The people of Cockle Creek were very impatient, but finally in August 1880 Thomas Palmer wrote to the new Department of Education the following letter:

"I have been requested by several of my neighbours to write to you to ascertain the cause of the delay in proceeding with the erection of a Public School at Cockle Creek.

Mr. Bridges (Inspector of Schools) selected a site in October /79. I believe it has been Gazetted and necessary forms gone through and only waited for survey to be conveyed to the late Council.

Anyway the consequence is that there are 6 or 7 families of children who make no pretence of going to school at all and many others, my own among the number go irregularly to Kincumber School which is 4 miles from my residence. The bulk of children who would attend said school if built are still further off Kincumber.

If I recollect right it was something like 45 children were engaged to attend.

Hoping you will favour with a reply to this."

The Department could only reply that all the plans and specifications for the building had been prepared but that work could not commence until the site was granted. It suggested, however, that Palmer might find a temporary building for the school, together with accommodation for a teacher.

Unfortunately the file relating to the buildings at Cockle Creek is missing from the records, so that it is impossible to work out what Palmer came up with. But certainly he found some sort of temporary accommodation, and the Department despatched some long desks and forms and a blackboard and easel to Cockle Creek late in 1880. A rather less patient Palmer wrote to the Department on 18th March 1881:

"I would respectfully remind you of the non-arrival of a teacher for the long delayed school at this place has the department forgotten that school furniture etc. was sent down some months ago and is now laying ready for use."

The Department was very short of teachers in this period, when it was opening new schools all over the colony, but finally on 8th April 1881 William Jeffreys was appointed teacher of Cockle Creek Public School; it had been necessary to find an unmarried teacher, who could board with a local resident until the permanent school and residence was completed.

Jeffreys had come to New South Wales from Mauritius in 1875, and had been teaching since 1876. His had been an inglorious career, including a dismissal and re-employment, and now in 1881 he was removed from McLean River Upper and Lower Half-Time Schools in the Forster district for the schools' good. Jeffreys angered the Department by taking an unreasonably long time to travel to his new school — he had stopped to visit some friends on the way, and did not reach Cockle Creek until 30th April.

INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED BY APPLICANTS.

1. Describe the position of the proposed School, namely:—

County,— *Northumberland*
 Parish,— *Kincumber*
 Post Town,—

2. What other schools, maintained or aided by the State, are within two miles of the site of the proposed School?

None

3. If none are within two miles, what is the distance of the nearest School?

Blackwall Provisional school. 2 3/4 miles viz 1 1/4 mile land & 1 1/2 water

4. Are there any Primary Schools, not aided by the State, within two miles of the proposed School? If so, of what character, and how attended?

None

5. State the number of children, from four to fourteen years of age, living within a radius of two miles of the site of the proposed School, e.g.:

Boys *25* *4*
 Girls *25* *2*

Total ... *50*

Religious Denominations—

Church of England *56* *32*
 Roman Catholic *18*
 Presbyterian
 Wesleyans.....
 Others

Total ... *50*

6. What land is available for a site on which to erect the necessary School Buildings? Give a Surveyor's description and, if possible, a plan of the ground.

Proposed site, on Government land adjoining the Public road from Kincumber to Loyds Wharf about 1/4 mile from Loyds Wharf or if thought by an inspector preferable Mr Wm Riley is willing to give a piece of freehold land in proximity to the above for the purpose

SCHOOL OPEN:

Cockle Creek Public School opened on Monday 2nd May 1881, and by the end of the month had a healthy enrolment of 42. (A copy of the school's first return is printed.) The day after the school opened Palmer wrote to the Department seeking a boat for the teacher and some ten or twelve pupils living on the other side of the river from the school. The Department refused the request, on the grounds that most of the residents had boats and that Departmental responsibility for a boat "would be attended with many difficulties".

During the latter part of 1881 Arthur Davis, a resident of Cockle Creek, began to erect a permanent school building. A weatherboard structure with a shingled roof, it comprised a schoolroom and a teacher's residence of either three or four rooms. It was occupied on 28th February 1882. By the end of that year the enrolment was 61, and things seemed to be going well at Cockle Creek.

Suddenly in December 1882 Jeffreys was ordered to leave Cockle Creek and go to another school. The transfer came as a surprise to the parents, who petitioned the Department to allow Jeffreys to stay. (A copy of their petition is printed). It turned out that Jeffreys had routinely applied for a couple of days' sick leave in November and Inspector McIntyre, having heard "rumours", decided to make some enquiries. These led him to interview Jeffreys, who admitted having been too drunk to go to school. This was not the first occasion — Jeffreys had been arrested and convicted for being drunk and disorderly in December 1881 — but no complaints had been made by the parents and the Department knew nothing of Jeffreys' drinking or neglect of duty. The parents' petition had no effect, Inspector McIntyre regarding it as having been organised by Jeffreys himself. The Department's senior officers considered it sufficient punishment to censure Jeffreys severely and send him to a smaller school, but the Minister for Education took a sterner view and decided to dismiss him: later he relented to the point of allowing Jeffreys to resign from the teaching service.

In January 1883, Mr. Jeffreys transferred to Howe's Valley School and Mr. John Robinson took charge of the school. By the time Mr. White assumed control of the school, repairs and renovations were necessary. White ants had destroyed timber in many places and also the structure needed painting. These improvements were effected by Mr. Lilly in October 1888 for £19.11.0.

Mr. White reported:

"Children are attending this school from Blackwall per steamer, but owing to prohibition of use of private wharf they are liable at any time to be cut off from attending this school. There exists however, adjoining above a Public Wharf, which however the DAILY STEAMER is unable to approach, owing to the wharf being 50 feet or less from deep water. Thus the wharf is accessible ONLY TO SKIFFS."

As a result of Mr. White's appeal for the completion of the wharf to deep water, £450 was set aside in the estimates of 1888 for this purpose. Unfortunately the records do not indicate whether the work was carried out.

Epidemics were fairly common in the nineteenth century. At Cockle Creek the teacher's two children were seriously affected by the diphtheria outbreak and "the parents are afraid the neighbourhood will be decimated if the school is not closed", Mr. White reported. Consequently in July 1888 the Department directed that the school be closed till the end of the month.

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27/5/81

Return showing the number of Pupils enrolled, and also the average daily attendance at the Public School at Cockle Creek, near Kincumber, during the month ending 27th May 1881.

Week ending	No. of Children on Roll			Average Weekly Attendance		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total	Boys.	Girls.	Total
May 6 th	15	18	33	13.4	14.6	28.
" 13 th	14	21	38	15.6	15.8	31.4
" 20 th	18	22	40	15.8	17.6	33.4
" 27 th	20	22	42	16.3	18.2	34.5
	- Averages -					
Total	20	22	42	15.3	16.5	31.8

*Public School,
Cockle Creek, 27th May 1881.*

*W. H. Jeffreys
Teacher*

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Closure of the school occurred a year later, heavy rain for five days and the flooded state of the country preventing attendance. Parents were concerned about the continual falling of limbs of trees in the bush and no children attended the school for a week.

During Mrs. Langford's term (in May 1895) as teacher, scarlet fever within her family and the fact that on one day only three children attended and on another day a solitary one caused the Department to close the school until the teacher could "resume duty with safety".

Whooping cough was the cause of the closure of the school for three weeks in August-September 1896. The next month the residents of Davis Town (on the other side of the creek) petitioned the Department for a new building on the more populated side, alleging that the Cockle Creek school building was in a most dilapidated condition, "being riddled by myriads of white ants"; and, further the majority of children were forced to cross the creek, then walk over a mile to school. According to the District Inspector, the case on both sides was fairly evenly balanced. Consequently he recommended that the school be retained in its present position.

The Department decided to effect improvements on the school building during 1898. The Clerk of Works declared that the weather-board school was in fair condition on the outside but the white ants had seriously damaged the interior and the teacher informed the Department that in spite of recent heavy rains the water tanks were all but empty, because the spouting was so defective. The successful tenderer, Mr. Arthur Davis, satisfactorily completed the required improvements on the 3rd August 1898 at a cost of £127.10.6.

In 1902 it was proposed to change the name of the school to Davis Town because school mail was carried first to Cockle Creek beyond Teralba. As well Davis Town was the name of the local post office and nearest village.

Mr. Tyler, who took charge of the school in 1907, informed the Department in March 1910 that the name of Davis Town School was misleading. He maintained that Empire Bay Post Office was three quarters of a mile from the school and on the west bank of Cockle Creek, that is on the same side as the school. In addition out of an enrolment of 24 pupils only one attended from Davistown. On the 23rd April, 1910 this change of name was officially approved.

At this time the school was surrounded by bush on three sides and the creek which traversed part of the grounds was alleged by the teacher to harbour snakes. There was ample playing space so the scrub was not cleared, but several improvements were carried out on the school and residence. The school and residence were still roofed with shingles which were old and consequently the roof leaked. Mr. J. Gibson of Marrickville effected these improvements to the roof, tanks and fences for £133 in 1911. The teacher was attempting to establish a garden but hares were damaging the plants, so wire netting was erected about this time.

There was a small group of children residing in Davistown who had to cross a bay about 400 yards wide to reach the school. None of these children could reach the school without crossing the water and because of this the Department paid Mr. Hugh Hagan 3d. per child per day to convey them across.

Further repair of the school buildings was considered impractical and on 9th November 1912 Tremayne Hammond and William Trigger contracted to erect a new school building, convert the old school into

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extra rooms at the residence and add two 800 gallon tanks. With extras the whole contract was completed at a cost of £254.9.0. The new school building was occupied on Wednesday 5th March, 1913 so that the builders could transform the old school into rooms at the residence. The whole contract was completed on 23rd May.

During the war years minor repairs were effected, but the most serious problem appeared to be that of eradicating the white ants in the building. For example, in December 1919 the teacher, Mr. Wharton, claimed that in 3½ years he had discovered three nests and recommended that the architect examine the buildings with a view to discover whether the building should be altered in some way, especially as both buildings, school and residence were almost on the ground. If any attempts at eradication of white ants were made, the reports of a later teacher, Mr. Walker, in 1924, indicate that further preventative measures were necessary. He reported:

"The house is in a dreadful state from white ants, and we have to keep moving our furniture frequently to keep it free from them. They have even begun to eat the provisions on the kitchen shelves".

In addition, gauze on windows was ineffective, one tank contained no water and the school was almost completely bare of paint. Extensive repairs to a value of £126 were finally carried out by April, 1925.

The white ants were not completely eradicated; in September 1926 Mr. Walker informed the Department that a new wall erected eighteen months ago was completely destroyed. He recommended the use of cypress pine or redwood, for most of the linings were of redwood and were untouched.

At his own expense Mr. Walker had a telephone installed in the residence during 1926 and was instrumental in having the school typewriter overhauled. He hoped to prepare work for the 6 or 7 pupils who had completed their primary course and were remaining at school.

The White Ant Expert employed by the Public Works Department treated the residence and left white ant poison for the teacher to use against the pest. It was found however that white ants were still strongly active in two inaccessible places. Mr. Tory applied the poison about 5 p.m. one sultry afternoon in November 1930 and "white ants were flying from the small opening in the roof iron in thousands for over an hour, and in appearance the phenomenon strongly resembled a snow storm". It was clear that the school and residence had never been really freed of the ravages of white ants.

In April 1934 Mr. R. B. Walker, M.L.A., brought under notice the need for additions and repairs to the Empire Bay School. A little later the Erina Shire Council also drew attention to the defective water supply and the decayed condition of the guttering around the building.

Mr. Inspector Cane, in February 1935, informed the Department of the peculiar difficulties in tourist centres. The existing building held only 44 pupils; in winter the enrolment was 49 but in summer the enrolment rose to 60. Consequently an additional classroom or an extension of the existing building by ten feet was necessary. As the industrial depression had not lifted no money was available until 1936. In October, Mr. Gordon Beattie agreed to extend the school room and effect other improvements for £275. Two years later the wooden stand of the thousand gallon tank at the residence had subsided eight inches, causing the tank to tilt toward the house and breaking the service pipes connections. These repairs were carried out by Mr. C. C. Swinbourne by August.

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50421
W. J. J. X
Attended
2 P. M.
H. S.
16
1890
1891

Requesting that Teacher - Mr. Jeffreys
may not be removed
Cockle Creek
Brisbane Water
10th December 1881

W. Wilkins Esq^r
Under Secretary,
Dept. of Public Instruction

Sir,
We, the undersigned parents of the
pupils attending the Cockle Creek Public
School, have the honor respectfully to state
that we have learnt with deep regret
that Mr. Jeffreys the teacher of the
said school is about to be removed to
another locality, and beg to request
that the Minister of Public Instruction
will be pleased to allow Mr. Jeffreys
to continue in his present position
as he has always performed his duties
with great zeal and care, and our
children have made very great progress
in their studies since Mr. Jeffreys
has been in charge of the school, as
shown by Mr. Inspector McEntyre's
last report.
We also mention that by his
able tuition Mr. Jeffreys has raised
the school from the III class to the
VII class.
We would therefore earnestly
request taking into account that
Mr. Jeffreys opened the school here

here has succeeded in establishing a
good school, and as he is expecting
his wife and children from Mauritius,
that the Minister will be pleased, in
his wisdom and benevolence, to re-
consider his decision, and permit
Mr. Jeffreys, to continue as our teacher
as he has gained our esteem and
confidence by his industry and able
tuition.

We have the honor to be Sir
Your most obedient Servants
E. J. Hughes

- J. Sutton J.
John Bourke
William Woodward
John Murray
James Mullin
William Hastings
Jack Pickett
Francis Humphreys
Jane Davis
P. Murry
J. J. Selwin - Cockle Creek
Giles Jenkins
Gavin Jones
L. Merrett
Richard Burrell
William Strand
Maurice Pisce
George Selton
W. Shields
J. Selton
Edward Beattie



COCKLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOL (EMPIRE BAY) 1895-96 WITH TEACHER MRS. ELIZABETH LANGFORD ON THE LEFT IN WHITE DRESS. THE CHILDREN INCLUDED PALMERS, SETTRES, RILEYS AND BEATTIES.



EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL — 1910's



CLASS OF 1912

BACK ROW: (L to R) Teachers Mr. & Mrs. Wheatley; Azalea Adams, Ella Beattie, Eva Beattie, Irelene Fitzgerald, Gladys Murray, Daphney Adams, Don Kinnear, Thelma Hastings,
 SECOND ROW: Eric Riley, W. Cummings, W. Jones,, Ella Davies,
 FRONT ROW: Allan Beattie, Walter Riley, Ernie Adams, Frank Adams, Chester Adams, Jack Riley?

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EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS Approx. 1912 WITH THEIR TEACHER, MR. WHEATLEY, HIS ASSISTANT AND SOME PARENTS



(Photos — courtesy J. Swinbourne)

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LET THERE BE LIGHT

In December 1938, Mr. Herne, the teacher-in-charge of Empire Bay Public School, made application to the Department of Education for the installation of electric lights and power points in both the school room and teacher's residence. The request for the installation of electricity in the school room was regrettably declined in February 1939, as conditions did not warrant any departure from Departmental practice of installing lights in schools.

In March, Mr. Herne was requested to obtain tenders for the installation of electricity in his residence, and in May Mr. F. H. Wood's quotation of £12 was accepted. Mr. Wood left the district, however, and the work was not carried out.

New tenders were invited in 1940, but work was not commenced as the stability of the residence was under review. The building was examined and in July repairs were carried out by the Department's Painting and Repair Staff at a cost of £8.15.0. Further action in connection with the installation of electricity was deferred at the time, as the replacement of the premises was under consideration.

In January 1943, the Department finally approved the request for the installation of electricity in the teacher's residence. The work was carried out by Mr. T. G. Peisley for a total cost of £17.6.0.

In September the Empire Bay Parents and Citizens' Association asked the Department to reconsider its refusal to instal electric light in the school building. The Secretary of the Association pointed out: "Our meetings are held at night and it is most discouraging to sit in the semi-darkness with a kerosene lamp". The Department declined to install a light in the school but stated that it was prepared to consider the installation of a power point should a radio be purchased. During 1948 a radio set was installed in the school.

In the early 1960's consideration was given to closing the school because of lack of pupils. This did not happen and numbers gradually increased, keeping above the required number of pupils for a school to open. In August of 1967 there were 23 pupils.

In August 1972 there were 38 pupils and by August 1973 the number of pupils had increased to 49 with a staff of two. Mr. T. Smith was the Principal and Miss S. Walkerden his assistant teacher.

From the beginning of 1974 the school was re-classified to that of a Class Three school due to anticipated numbers being in excess of a one teacher school classification. In August 1974 enrolment was 50 and in August 1976 it was 59.

From the middle 1970's to the present considerable growth has taken place in housing in the area. In addition to this, St. Hubert's Island was developed and settlement began swiftly. The influx of pupils from St. Hubert's Island began in 1974 with records showing Sarah Shipp being the first to be enrolled from the Island in July of that year. Possibly the main factor in the upsurge of housing in the area was the opening of the Rip Bridge in 1974 thus providing a direct road link to Woy Woy.

Enrolments jumped very quickly from 1976. In August 1977 enrolment was 105; in August 1979 it was 174 and in August 1980 it reached 221.

The above increase in enrolments brought about a corresponding increase in staffing. In 1972 the school had one Teacher-in-Charge, in 1973 an assistant was appointed. In 1977 the staff rose to 4 teachers;

in 1978 to 5 teachers and in 1979 to 6 teachers (full time) and as well a part time Craft Teacher and Teacher-Librarian. In 1980 the teaching staff totalled 9 full time teaching staff and 2 part time. At the same time a corresponding increase in classroom accommodation has taken place mainly of the demountable variety. The first demountable classroom being provided in 1973.

With the greatly increased enrolment in the late seventies, the school organisation has benefited greatly from the appointment of ancillary staff under the provisions as laid down by the Department of Education. In 1974 a part time Clerical Assistant, Mrs. N. Stuart was appointed. Mrs. D. Ross began duties in May 1979 and this position became a full time position from the beginning of 1980. A teacher's Aide position was filled by Mrs. H. Hind in February, 1980 and a part time Library Assistant position was established in February, 1979 being filled by Mrs. C. Webster.

From term one 1981 the school classification was changed from that of Class Three to Class Two. Due to this, the Principal position was upgraded to that of Principal 11 and the appointment of a Deputy Principal was made. In June 1981 the pupil enrolment was 259.

In recent years parent involvement in school activities has been strong and ranges from Kindergarten to Year 6. Mothers assist in reading group work, other classroom activities and assist the Craft Teacher in such activities as macrame, knitting, crochet, weaving, hessian wall hangings and rug making with children from Year 3 to Year 6.

A School badge was introduced in 1980. In 1981 School Captains were elected by the pupils of the school.

A canteen began operating successfully in 1974 on a one day a week basis providing lunches for pupils thus providing a service and some financial assistance to the school.

Since the appointment of a Teacher-Librarian in 1979 a school library has been gradually built up being housed in the clerical office section of the two classroom weatherboard building which was supplied for the 1978 school year. This weatherboard building made provision for a staffroom, Principal's Office and Ancillary Staff area. With the increase in pupil population and staff of the school working space has been very crowded indeed.

In 1977 a new toilet block of brick construction was completed to cater for the increase in school population. In 1978, after many representations by the P. & C., a fence was provided enclosing the school playground.

In 1981 a Library was constructed of brick with Audio Visual facilities. This is a valuable asset to the school.

The history of Empire Bay Public School would not be complete without mention of Mr. Arthur (Leo) Jones, the school's longest serving teacher. Mr. Jones was Teacher-In-Charge from July, 1940 until his retirement in 1971. A plaque was unveiled in his honour by the District Inspector in 1970 bearing the following inscription:

"In recognition of the 30 years service in this school, this plaque was unveiled in honour of:

Mr. A. L. (Leo) Jones,
by A. O. McFarland,
District Inspector of Schools,
28th July, 1970"

THIS PAGE WAS SPONSORED BY SINGLETONS



In this photo, are seen the Shadow Pole, standing in a solid, permanent cement floor, the Sun-dial, and back of Manual Training Shed, &c.

EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

PHOTO — EDUCATION GAZETTE - 1915
SUNDIAL IN SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

THIS PAGE WAS SPONSORED BY GOSFORD TAILORING

The first student to gain a Teachers' Scholarship from the school was Eva Beattie who in 1914 at 15 years of age gained a Scholarship to Sydney Teachers' College. Her first appointment was at Ourimbah.

Well known local identities, Clarice Beattie and her brother, Harry, our milk vendors; were enrolled in this school in 1929 and 1930.

Another ex-pupil George Brown, enrolled 1933, suggests that more information might be available today about the school if the white ants hadn't eaten the records!

EMPIRE BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

ENROLMENTS & AVERAGE ATTENDANCES

YEAR	ENROLMENT	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE
1881	45	31
1882	61	38
1885	27	18
1890	18	12
1895	26	20
1900	27	21
1904	18	15
1915	22	15
1920	35	26
1930	47	35
1935	51	41
1940	36	29
1945	27	23
1955	-	27
1960	42	39
1965	29	27
1970	22	21
1975	50	47
1980	222	211



CLASS OF 1936

(Photo — courtesy - Mrs. B. Kirk)

THIS PAGE WAS SPONSORED BY H. G. MARGIN

CELEBRATING WATTLE DAY - Approx. 1936



Teacher Mr. H. Tory, Boy with white beard - George Brown. (Photo — courtesy B. Kirk)

CELEBRATING WATTLE DAY — Approx. 1936



(Photo — courtesy - B. Kirk)

THIS PAGE WAS SPONSORED BY VILLAGE TWIN



MARY PERNECKER BEING PRESENTED WITH A BOOK BY MRS. MARY SETTREE ON LEAVING SCHOOL 1960. (Photo — courtesy M. Jones)



MARCHING — GOSFORD — 1960
(Photo — courtesy Mrs. M. Jones)

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LIST OF HEAD TEACHERS

Name	Date of Appointment
William Jeffreys	April, 1881
John D. Robinson	January, 1883
Evan Francis	January, 1886
James E. White	March, 1886
Mrs. Elizabeth Rockell	June, 1889
J. Crimmings (temporary)	September, 1889
Mrs. Elizabeth Langford	February, 1891
William E. P. Tyler	January, 1907
Alexander Wheatley	January, 1912
William Wharton	May, 1916
Herbert Denny	December, 1921
Clyde Walker	June, 1923
Henry Tory	June, 1928
Herbert Walsh	May, 1940
Arthur (Leo) L. Jones	July, 1940
T. M. Smith	January, 1972
Ronald Phillips	January, 1974
John Deasey	January, 1981

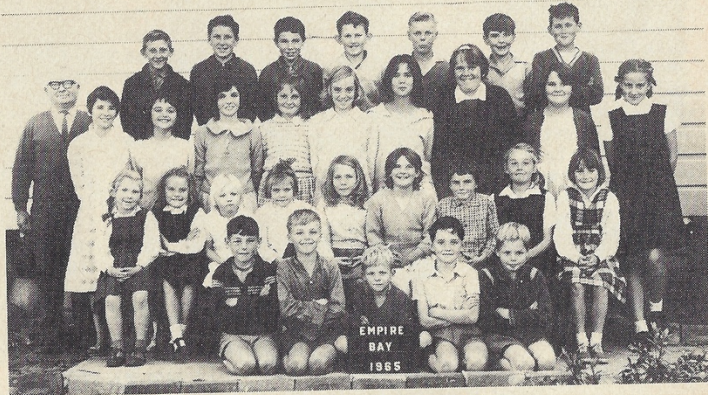
FLASHBACKS



THE 'SAN JOSE' COMMENCED SERVICE IN 1906. IT SERVED THIS DISTRICT - KINCUMBER CREEK TO WOY WOY. THE SAN JOSE IS STILL AFLOAT IN SYDNEY
(Photo—courtesy G. Condon)

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CLASS OF 1965



TEACHER: MR. ARTHUR (LEO) JONES

CLASS OF 1967



TEACHER: MR. ARTHUR (LEO) JONES

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CLASS OF 1971



TEACHER: MR. ARTHUR (LEO) JONES

CLASS OF 1973



LOWER DIVISION — TEACHER: S. WALKERTON

THIS PAGE WAS SPONSORED BY PALINGS MUSIC CENTRE



CLASS OF 1973 — UPPER DIVISION

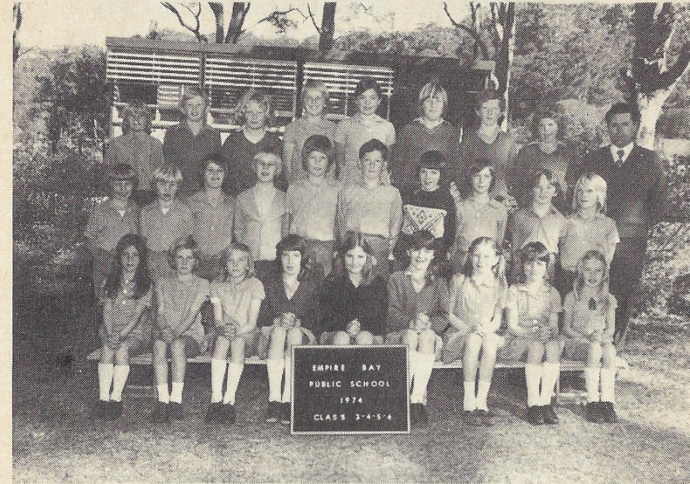
BACK ROW: (L to R) Mr. T. Smith (teacher), John Harris, Jacqueline Harris, Vicki Colson, Carolyn Pacey, Cathy Walker, Danial Saniford
 2nd ROW: Berti Hartelt, Mathew Adams, James Henderson, Paul Whittey, Mark Saniford, Denis Hall, Mark Ferness, Ivan Ward.
 3rd ROW: Debbie Hall, Paul Bourke, Ian McGilchrist, Glen Elder, James McGilchrist, Helen Aller, Sharon Ferness.
 FRONT ROW: Paula Bourke, Lynette Smith, Jenny Sawyer, Karen Whittey.



CLASS OF 1974 — LOWER DIVISION

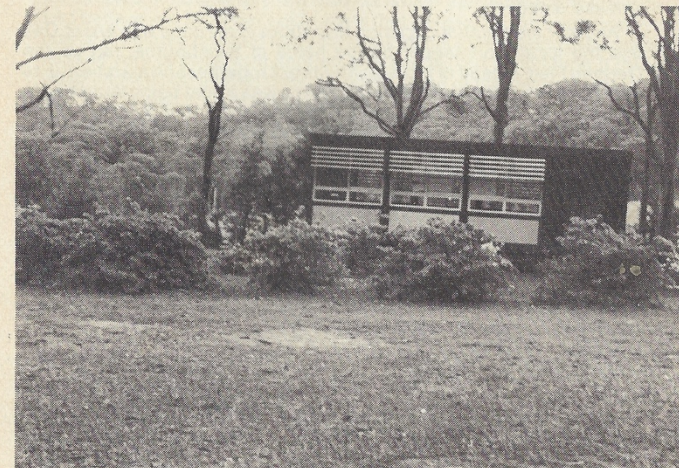
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CLASS OF 1974 — UPPER DIVISION



TEACHER: R. PHILLIPS

1973 — THE FIRST OF DEMOUNTABLE CLASSROOMS



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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

NEVILLE RICHARD SHAILER

My teachers's name was Mr. Tory (1928-1938). He lived at the school in rather a nice house on the right hand side. He was married, had a daughter Dorothy Tory and son Ken and was the only person to own a car in the Bay. He was a First World War Digger, who believed the war was still on in 1935, 1936 and 1937.

A funny incident I recall was him running into the classroom with his army uniform on and putting his fist through the back wall which was full of white ants.

The school was one room with the name of the school outside and the date underneath. It had around ¼ acre for a playground, it had a deep creek at the back which used to flood. Near Tory's house stood this giant acorn tree. The classroom sat around 25 pupils and the drinking water came from a tank on the left hand side. I attended school at six which makes it 1935, 1936 and 1937 era.

Some of my classmates in that era were, Ken Tory, Dorothy Tory, Betty Shailer, Jim Brown, George Brown, Jim McGlenn, Roy Killean, Lorna Killean, Betty Settree, Norma Settree, Doris Settree, Fred Adams, Daphne Hinks, Albert Davis, Davie Franks, Roy Trigg, Donald Trigg, and June Partridge.

On some special and memorable occasions, all the pupils would line up and march down into Empire Bay and have races outside Davis and Settree's store. On one occasion I won a white handled pocket knife. On another occasion I went around behind the tank stand and caught Ken Tory and Fred Adams smoking. They took hold of me and made me have a few draws so as not to put them in to Ken Tory's father. I haven't smoked since.

Another memorable occasion that sticks in my mind was Anzac Day and the local storekeeper by the name of Swinbourne, ran up the German Flag. A band of local residents got together and marched up to make him take it down. Another occasion was a boat being launched in front of the local store and on the way down the slips it turned on its side into the mud and half filled with water. All the locals of Empire Bay and Davistown came to see this outstanding event. The boat was righted and used to come to Empire Bay from Sydney every two weeks with the store's supplies. We could go to Sydney on this for a fee of 5/-. This boat was later used as a minesweeper in the 2nd War and was later sunk off New Guinea — it was called "*The Erina*".

N. R. Shailer
6/32 Waiwera Street, North Sydney

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

ARTHUR STANLEY (TOBY) HUGHES

I attended school there in the 1905-6 period and during my time, there were three teachers at different periods. Firstly there was Mrs. Langford and then followed a Mr. Tyler and then came Mr. Wheatley. One of Mr. Tyler's daughters, now Mrs. Clyde Singleton lives at Blackwall, Woy Woy.

The school, with dwelling attached, was like most schools of those times — a room, not very large, standing on a block of ground, possibly about half an acre. It was a weather-board structure with a shingle roof and, incidentally, my father cut or helped to cut and supply the shingles for the roof.

Another item of interest which I have is a book which was a Christmas gift from the School Picnic held at Davistown in 1909. At present it is on loan to one of your pupils, a Mrs. Grant's daughter.

To my knowledge there are two of the pupils of my days still with us, one is Mrs. Coult of Booker Bay and her brother Clarrie who lives at Avoca and possibly Les Settree of Davistown.

I remember most of those who were attending school in my time, they were: Jack, Effie, Eve and Ella Beattie, Arthur and Ben Davis, Cliff Hagan, Jack and Bill Cummings, Dorothy Wooding, Douglas McFaden, Frank, Daphne and Iris Adams, Jack and Clive Simpson, Ken and Ruby Davis, Jack, Ivy, Clarrie, Eric and Rupert Riley.

There are quite a few incidents I remember and the wallopings I got for being mixed up in them — probably done me a good service. I am now 81 and have managed to stay on the straight and narrow since those days. A couple of the incidents which earned me a few sixers, and believe me, Bill Tyler could wield that persuader. On one occasion one of my mates pinched thirty shillings off his elder brother and made himself very popular with another boy and myself by splitting it three ways and we had a great time. Amongst some of the things we bought was a pipe and a tin of tobacco each.

Another of our misdeeds, we three used to go down to the little shop at Empire Bay which was then owned by a Mr. Huggard and collect the mail, bread and meat for Mr. Tyler, so we got the idea of booking up a few Tea Cakes and Biscuits in his name and pinching a few bottles of drinks, but like the story, crime did not pay and eventually we ran out of luck and paid the penalty.

I have always thought over the years (I am now 81) that those said wallopings may have helped throughout life as I have always managed to stay on the straight and narrow since those days.

Arthur Stanley (Toby) Hughes
183 Ocean View Road
Ettalong Beach

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

FOND MEMORIES OF THE OLD EMPIRE BAY SCHOOL

JAMES C. SWINBOURNE

Empire Bay in the early 1900's was a paradise for us young boys between the ages of 5 and 16 years. No families had much money, but we were never short of good nourishing food. We roamed free, as did the cattle and horses of those days and their attention to the grass everywhere kept the place close-cropped and tidy.

An energetic boy could almost keep the family supplied with food, in such variety as: fish, crabs and oysters from ocean and estuary, vegetables from a garden, milk, cream and butter from a cow, eggs, chicken and duck from the fowl yard. In winter, when the Swamp Mahoganies were in bloom, we dined on the multitudes of Gill Birds that arrived; they made delicious stews and pies. After heavy rains, mushrooms could be gathered from roadside and paddock. To supplement all this, were the native foods we consumed: Pigeon Berries, Lilli Pilli Berries, Puddings, 5 Corners, gum extruded from the Black Wattles, small yams dug in the school grounds, wild Strawberries and Raspberries and the tender young leaves of the Sarsaparilla Vine. In season, pears, quinces and lemons could be had from the neglected trees left by the passing of some old Pioneer. Also in season we would be invited to help ourselves to the fruit of Loquat, Mulberry and Guava trees, by kindly neighbours.

Besides roving through the bush, swamps, over hills and ocean shore of rock and sand, we traversed the river in boats, always barefooted and always with a battered old hat on. Our chores were many: taking the wheel-barrow into the bush and returning home with a load of cut-up firewood, milking the cows, tending the poultry and garden and, of course, going to school.

The walk to school was always full of interest which varied with the seasons. In Spring we passed by areas immaculately white with the flowering of Tea-tree and Wedding Bush, then festoons of Wonga and Clematis vines, the breath-taking splendour of purple of the false Sarsaparilla, the wealth of golden yellow of Pee-the-beds, Dandelion, Wattle and Golden Pea, Flowering Eucalyptus and a multitude of others. Summer was the time of the Cicadas. We marvelled at the processes of Nature, as the Cicadas emerged from their nymph-coverings; such beauty from the grotesque! Strangely, also, we revelled with them, in their ear-shattering song from the tree tops. Autumn was the time of the emergence of the Wanderer Butterflies from their cocoons among the Milk Weeds and the time of the migration preparations of the flocks of Starlings. Winter, was the time of the heavy rains, when we paddled bare-footed through the rills and puddles on the roadway, suffered frozen fingers and toes and usually had to contend with colds. Also at this time when the southerly gales lashed the coast and built up the tides to flooding proportions, the waters backed up over the swamp and low shore making Empire Bay proper an island until, the receding tide again dispersed the overflow. After such an event we would be able to catch small Mullet trapped in the waterholes in the swamp. During these gales we would stand on our verandah and watch the progress of the Settler brothers, who had the mail run, rowing double-sculls across to Davistown through the haze of rain-squall and tormented water, taking the mails to Woy Woy.

To the school came children who were rowed by boat from Davistown, walked from Sunnyside (now Bensville) and, if I can remember correctly, the children of one family, Georgettes, came from near the Orphanage. Rileys and Meyers came from Booker Bay over the hill and Beatties and Fortunes from Daleys Point. The school was just one room, with each long stool to a class, first class being at the front near the entrance, whilst sixth was the last stool in the second row. The teachers desk and the blackboard were in front, as was the stock cupboard upon which was a row of bottles containing preserved snakes killed in the area. These, biting ants and stinging insects, plus an occasional bull that roamed into the area, were the only things that upset our Paradise. Often, when returning home from school in the evenings, our prattle and noise would disturb a large Red-bellied Black Snake warming itself by the roadside and send it hurtling through the bush.

In the school porch were hooks upon which we hung our hats and wet-weather gear, and where we spun our tops. Outside, fronting the road were two tanks and adjacent on the wall was a row of nails, upon which hung mugs made from food cans with a handle soldered upon them and large red numbers on their sides. In this ground area was the Rounders and Marble playing section, a big swing and cricket pitch were near the fence. Near the front gate was a Hurdy Gurdy, constructed from a tree trunk set in the ground with the top rounded-off at about three feet high, a log scarved to fit the top was balanced on it and pivotted with a large bolt. To balance the log the larger end had to be shorter than the smaller end. The dare-devils forked the longer end, clinging tenaciously with legs and hands as it rotated with considerable speed, urged on by the teams of pushers facing the opposite directions on either side of the pole in near the pivot. It was finally removed after a few fingers had been squashed by being negligently inserted in the space bolt and the hole in the log. On the top side of the school the area contained a lot of natural bush, and here we constructed cubby-houses at times. A creek lined with Cutty Rushes and inhabited by Frogs, ran along the back, beyond this was our garden area. Two toilets built over holes dug in the ground were also set among the trees. Against the building here, we played Egg-in-the-Hat, using Burrawong Palm Nuts as counters, a Tennis Ball and of course, our hats. The idea was for someone with a ball to throw it into a hat, the owner of which had to race and get it and try and hit one of the fleeing players, if he missed he had a nut put in his hat and if he hit, they had a nut put in their hat. A certain number of nuts in a hat meant the player was out. South of the school building were two see-saws, one low-level and the other a long pole pivotted in the top of a high burned-out stump; only the very game children would venture on this as the fall from its highest reach was considerable.

I commenced school during the year at the end of Mr. Wheatley's time. He was a robust man with white hair and moustache and always wore a bowler hat. That was at the end of 1915. The next teacher was Mr. Denny, followed by Mr. Wharton. I left school soon after the arrival of Mr. Walker, as I gained the Qualifying Certificate in 1921, and stayed on for a year or so doing Perspective Drawing, as a means of getting to the Gosford Intermediate High School had not been pioneered. However, I went to the G.I.H.S. for three years from 1924 until 1927. The Empire Bay teachers were all keen and well-liked educationalists, under whom we all progressed admirably. Their discipline was mildly strict and this, with the provoked use of the cane, gained them a lot of respect.

One of the memorable days at school was Empire Day, when we commenced the day saluting the most beautiful of all flags, having talks and lustily and patriotically singing 'Advance Australia Fair', where we were warned — "It is Let Us Sing — not lettuce", then through 'Rule Britannia', and so on until 'God Save the King', section of which had me baffled for years, as to what was meant by 'ray noblus'. A similar day was Armistice Day, when we were presented with an Armistice Day Medal each, and in latter years observed the two minutes silence. Then there was Prize Day, when we proudly went to collect our prizes, the medals being donated for years after she left by Azalea Adams. And Exam. Day, when strict silence prevailed and we were constantly observed. Another memorable day was the day we roamed the hills collecting wild flowers and returning to school to make up the exhibit to be entered in the Woy Woy Wild Flower Show, more often than not being the winners of the Schools Exhibit. The bunch usually had a centre piece of Waratahs, then circled by flowers of different colours. Everlasting, Boronia, Grevillias, Coral Heath, Honey Flowers, Flannel Flowers and others with fairly good lasting qualities. Once a year we went by launch on a picnic to Pretty Beach and Killcare with our parents. On arrival some mothers would collect the food brought and set it all out, while we played or went for a walk over the hill to Putty (now Killcare) Beach. Later after a good tuck-in and an exceedingly happy day, we would return home in the evening.

All this made very happy children of us and such pleasant memories and reminiscences for these days when our youth and useful life is over.

James C. Swinbourne

FLASHBACKS



THE OLD EMPIRE BAY GENERAL STORE

Built by Mr. Christopher Charles Swinbourne, who came from Milthorpe in 1908.
(Photo — courtesy Gwen Condon)

EXTRACT FROM:

PLACE NAMES OF THE CENTRAL COAST

ORIGINS & MEANINGS by EILEEN PRATT

HISTORICAL MONOGRAPH No. 5

COCKLE CREEK:

Shell gathering was one of the main industries at the beginning of settlement. Cockle shells were gathered at low water, loaded on to punts and taken to Sydney for lime burning.

EMPIRE BAY:

Empire Bay was originally known as SORRENTO being the name of a large boarding house in the locality. The land was subdivided by Arthur Rickard & Co. as "Sorrento Estate" in 1905.

The name changed to Empire Bay in 1908 when a Postal Receiving Office was opened in a building attached to the boarding house. The following information was obtained from records held by the Australian Archives. The source of this information was:-

General Post Office, Sydney, Post Office File

"Empire Bay", 1908-1917

Australian Archives Accession SP 32/1

"According to a report written by the Acting Postal Inspector and dated June 1, 1908, it was necessary to change the name of the locality because a Post Office named "Sorrento" already existed in Victoria. The report goes on to say that the residents had unanimously chosen "Empire Bay" and that there was no other such name in the Commonwealth".

Local legend related that the Postal Inspector was at Sorrento on Empire Day (24th May) and that is why the residents chose Empire Bay.

The owner of "Sorrento House" (William Huggart) was appointed Postmaster to receive £5 per annum, but his salary increased to £10 the following year when the status of the office was increased to Post Office. In 1910 C. C. Swinburne became Postmaster and moved the office to his General Store.

"Sorrento House" has since been cut in halves to form two dwellings which can be seen, side by side, in Sorrento Road (No's. 9 & 11). The original receiving office was moved a short distance and is now No. 7.