



NSW,  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
EDUCATION  
AND  
COMMUNITIES

# Wyong High School History 1944 - 2014

Compiled by Warwick Horner Teacher 1975 to 2012

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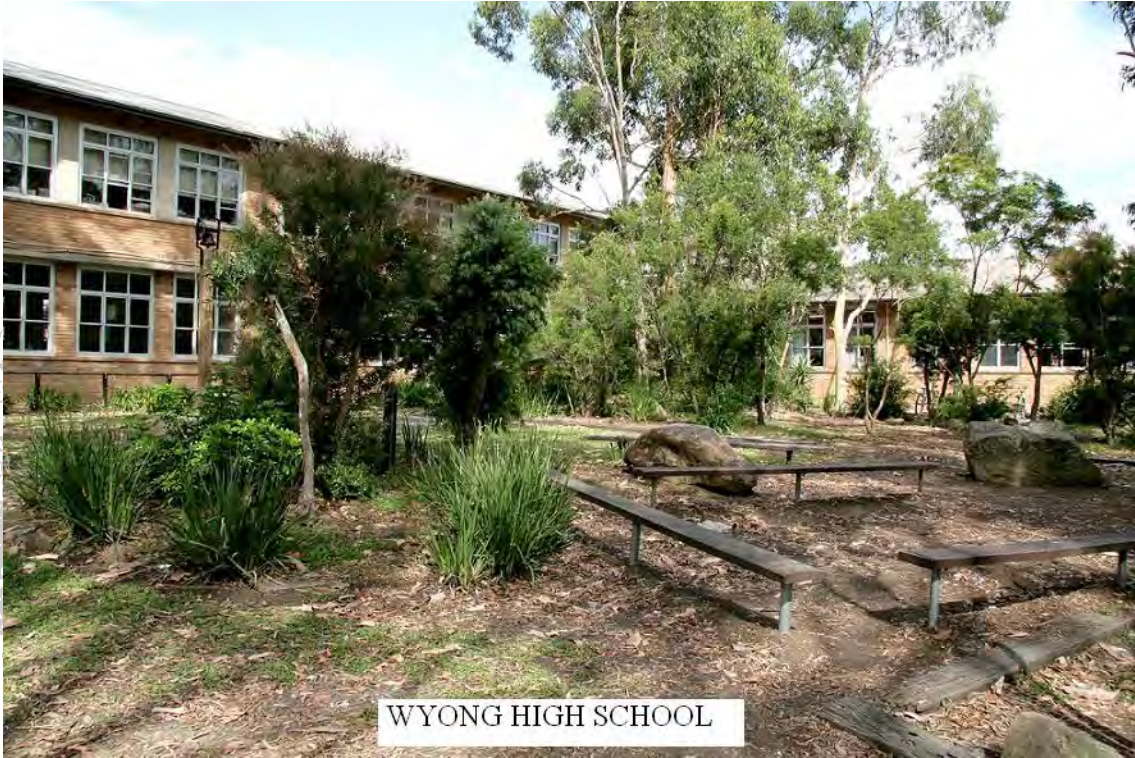


### WYONG HIGH SCHOOL – A TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL

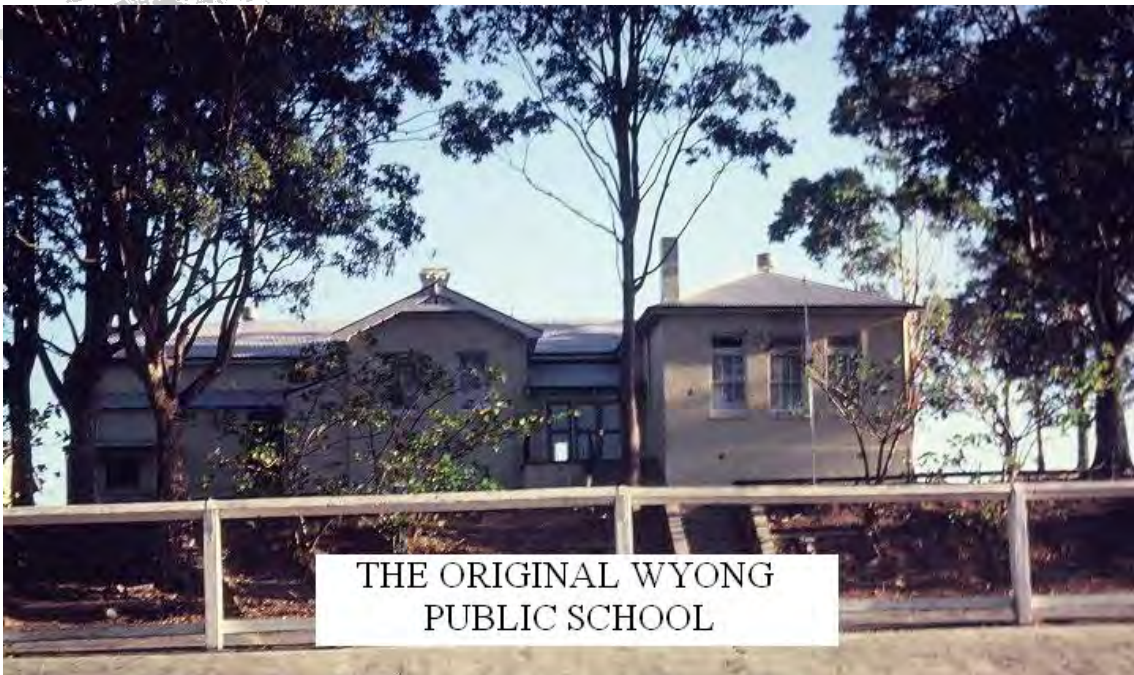
#### A SCHOOL WITH HISTORY FROM 1944

Many primary schools in the 1940's had secondary pupils attending and following what were known as "composite courses". Such was the case with **Wyong Public School** in Alison Road Wyong.

The school was built on the land known as "Chapman's Paddock". This area was Wyong's first sports ground until Baker Park was opened in the early 1900's.



WYONG HIGH SCHOOL



THE ORIGINAL WYONG  
PUBLIC SCHOOL

From December 1940 Mr Allen was principal of Wyong Public School, and he was the person given the greatest credit for the push towards the creation of a secondary school in Wyong. Gosford High School was the district's only high school.

Records show that in 1943 there are 33 secondary pupils on average attending the "composite courses" in a wooden building in the grounds of the old **Wyong Public School** in Alison Road Wyong. The building had come from Ourimbah and the group was called 7<sup>th</sup> Class.



In accordance with a new system of classification of schools, these "composite courses" were upgraded.

In June 1942 the land was acquired through the efforts of the Member for Wyong, **Mr D'Arcy Rose** M.L.A for the building of a school. The land was across the road from Mr Rose's home in Alison Road, and was known locally as Chapman's Paddock.

Here is the current **Wyong Public School in Cutler Drive Wyong**, opened in 1979. The old school in Alison Road Wyong has closed, and is now a community asset. The Wyong cenotaph is in its grounds.



**This is the school new badge. Oranges reflect the once thriving citrus industry and the old motto "Truth and Loyalty" has been replaced by "Personal Best".**

## WYONG CENTRAL SCHOOL

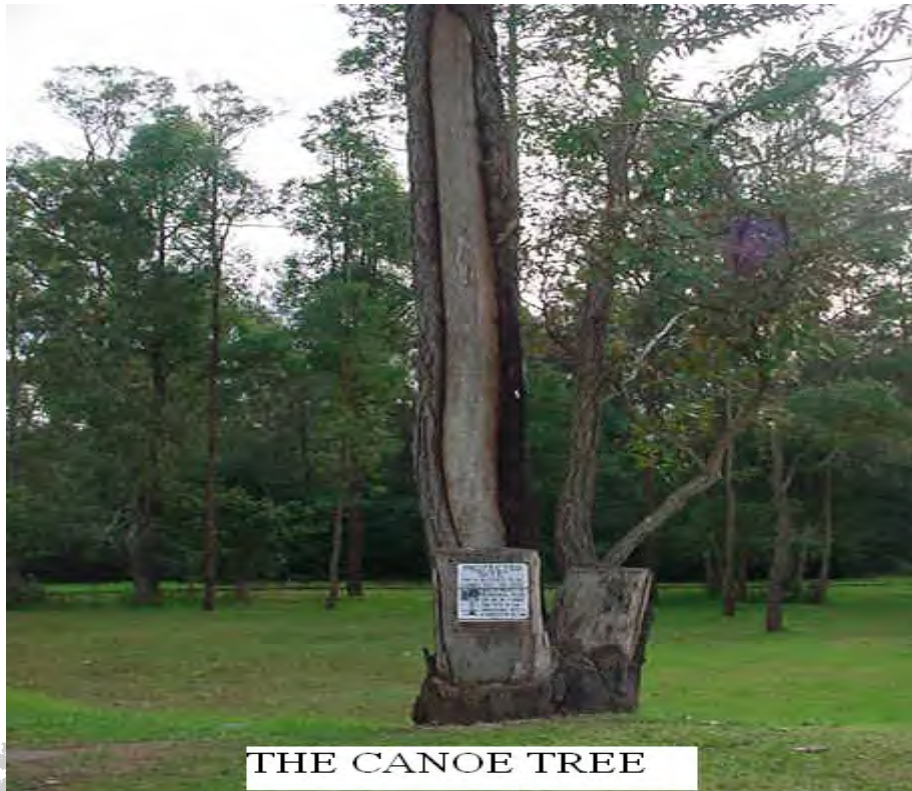
November 1, 1943 **Mr Allen** died. He had been very ill for some time, as he had been gassed in the First World War, but his work was recognised. His wife was asked to attend the official beginning of **Wyong Central School** on **March 4, 1944**.

The Principal appointed was **Mr Roy Devine**. There were 136 secondary students. The Central School had begun with a staff of four, and now there were fifteen. Mr Devine was living in the residence at the primary school in Alison Road, and hoped they would build a residence on the new site.

### **Aboriginal Heritage**

Well before white settlement (around 1823), the Aboriginal peoples of the Wyong area camped in the high school's locality, as they had fresh water from the Wyong river behind what is now the high school farm plot.





Evidence of Aboriginal occupation is found in the sandstone engraving and groove site located in the farm plot, as well as the canoe tree where the bark was removed to make a boat. We acknowledge the Darkinjung people, and their ongoing connection to the community.

The building of the new school (Blue Block) began on the site known to the locals as “**Chapman’s paddock**”. **The foundation stone was laid on March 22 1946**, by the Minister for Education R.G. Heffron. This stone is located near the entrance to our front office in Blue Block. The school building was designed for 350 pupils. Mr Heffron officially opened the school on Friday November 7, 1947. Plaque is on wall at front office entry. Mr Heffron said that much credit was owed to the local Member of Parliament, **Mr D’Arcy Rose**, and that as long as there was a brick standing in the school, Mr D’Arcy Rose’s name would be associated with it. The school was Mr Rose’s “baby”. Parents and Citizens Association President, Mr Roy Quayle described the school as a wonderful asset to the whole community, and that they should join together to beautify the school grounds and support it.

The “Fairy godmother” of local education was **Mr Sam Mc Kimm**. As well as being a teacher at Dooralong, Mr Mc Kimm was president of the Wyong District Agricultural Association. They too had put the pressure on for the building of a school, and were to make regular grants to help in the purchase of equipment. The association also held the Wyong Show, and the showgrounds (now the racecourse) were where the school athletic carnivals were first held, before the move to Baker Park.

**The Central School title began state-wide in 1944**, as schools containing both primary and secondary sections, and providing secondary education for children from nearby primary schools.

In 1949 there were 328 pupils enrolled at Wyong Central School.

In February 1950 the school was proclaimed a **Junior High School**. This was a term used for schools from 1930 to 1976 as a separate secondary school which offered junior secondary education only.

In this year 1950 “**The Lakes**” school magazine was first published.

## **WYONG HIGH SCHOOL**

This was the name of the school from 1952.

(1952 I was born. My parents had honeymooned in Wyong, and destiny was underway.)

School colours **Red and White**.

From 1990 the school was designated a “**technology**” **High School**, and the staff and community moved for the school to retain its traditional name, which is why we are recognised as **Wyong High School** – A Technology High School. The School Council, which was formed in 1993, also ratified this name for the school.

**School Badge:**



The badge came about in 1950 when it was changed from the old Central School badge, which was a white star on red background. The design was chosen from 1949 to 1952 by an art teacher, Mr Jack Walker-Smith who would spend his whole career at Wyong High. Mr Walker-Smith sadly passed away in 2014, the school’s 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

**The rungs of the ladder** are the years (or forms) from the days when there were only five years at secondary school. The ladder moves upwards into the heavens, depicted on the badge by the old white star.

The ladder symbolised the motto of the Central School.

**“Tentando Superabis”**

**.... by striving to attain great heights, you will achieve/succeed.**

In the 1990’s this was interpreted as

**.... by experimenting, you will achieve your goals.**

## PRINCIPALS (at one time referred to as Headmasters)

1944 to 1949 Mr Roy Devine

1950 to 1951 Mr W.E. (Bill) Gollan

1952 to 1957 Mr J.S Rae

1958 to 1966 Mr H.A (Hec) Egger (who introduced Market Day)

1967 to 1970 Mr A. (Andy) Laurenson

1971 to 1977 Mr Doug Ross

1978 to 1987 Mr Cec Dwyer

1988 to 1991 Mrs Margaret (Maggie) Bowman

1992 to 1994 Mr Michael Brown

1995 to 2003 Mr John Dale

2003 to 2007 Mrs Lynne Rumley

2007 to 2011 Mr Stuart Scott

2012 to 2014 Mrs Megan Johnson

2014 to Mr Rodney Hill

### Some of the Deputy Principals you may remember:

Mr Callaghan/ Mr Cameron/ Mr Buckland/ Mr Lou Jones/ Mr Bob Goldie/ Mr Derek Foster/ Mr Les Skidmore/ Mr John O'Brien/ Mr Ken Jagleman/ M/s Lindy Hunt/ Mrs Cynthia Moore/ Mrs Lisa Muir/ Mr Steve Harris/ Mr Phil Reynolds/ Mr Murray Balfe  
Mrs Adrienne Scalese/ Ms Raity Batha.

### The Leaving Certificate

In 1951 the first Fifth Year sat for the Leaving Certificate Examination.... There were 7 candidates!

The subjects they sat for were: English/ Modern History/ Chemistry/ Home Economics / General Mathematics / Agriculture/ Needlecraft & Garment Construction.

The Tuck Shop (Canteen) was originally owned by Wes and Min Douglas.

**SCHOOL HOUSES:** The four houses were named after important Wyong identities. Alongside are the proposed symbols for each house, but were not used.

**ALLEN:** (Gold) A tribute to **Mr. Allen**, a former headmaster of Wyong Public School, who worked tirelessly to make the building Wyong High reality. He died in November 1943, but his wife was a special guest at the official beginning of Wyong Central School on March 4, 1944.



**BAKER:** (Red) Named after **Mr Frederick “Gersh” Baker**, who was the local dentist and was one of the town’s greatest sports persons and citizens. This very popular public figure died in 1948. He was a rower, played football and cricket, taught boxing, sang and entertained at concerts, and was very active in all the town’s organisations. The Levenspiel family continue his heritage.



**MC KIMM:** (Blue) In honour of **Samuel Armour Mc Kimm**, a teacher at Dooralong Public School. Mc Kimm taught from 1908 to 1950 at this school. He was a member of the agricultural Association responsible for the Wyong show, and he was also on the committee which began trotting racing in 1936. The grandstand at Wyong racecourse was named after him. Athletic carnivals for our school were first held at the Wyong Racecourse/ Showground.

**ROSE:** (Green) named after the local Member of Parliament, **Mr. D’Arcy Rose**. He owned the local feed and produce store “Steggles”. It was he, who pressured the government to buy an area of land known as “Chapman’s Paddock” in 1942 as the site for the building of Wyong High... begun in 1946 with his support.

## The School Song

From the shores of Tuggerah Lakes  
To the gates of Wyong High  
We hold our High School banner  
With our heads held mighty high.

We're the best school in the nation,  
Though we don't like to boast,  
We will never be defeated  
By mortal man or ghost  
(To the tune of "The Halls of Montezuma")

## **BUILDINGS.**

Main or Blue block 1946 plus additions

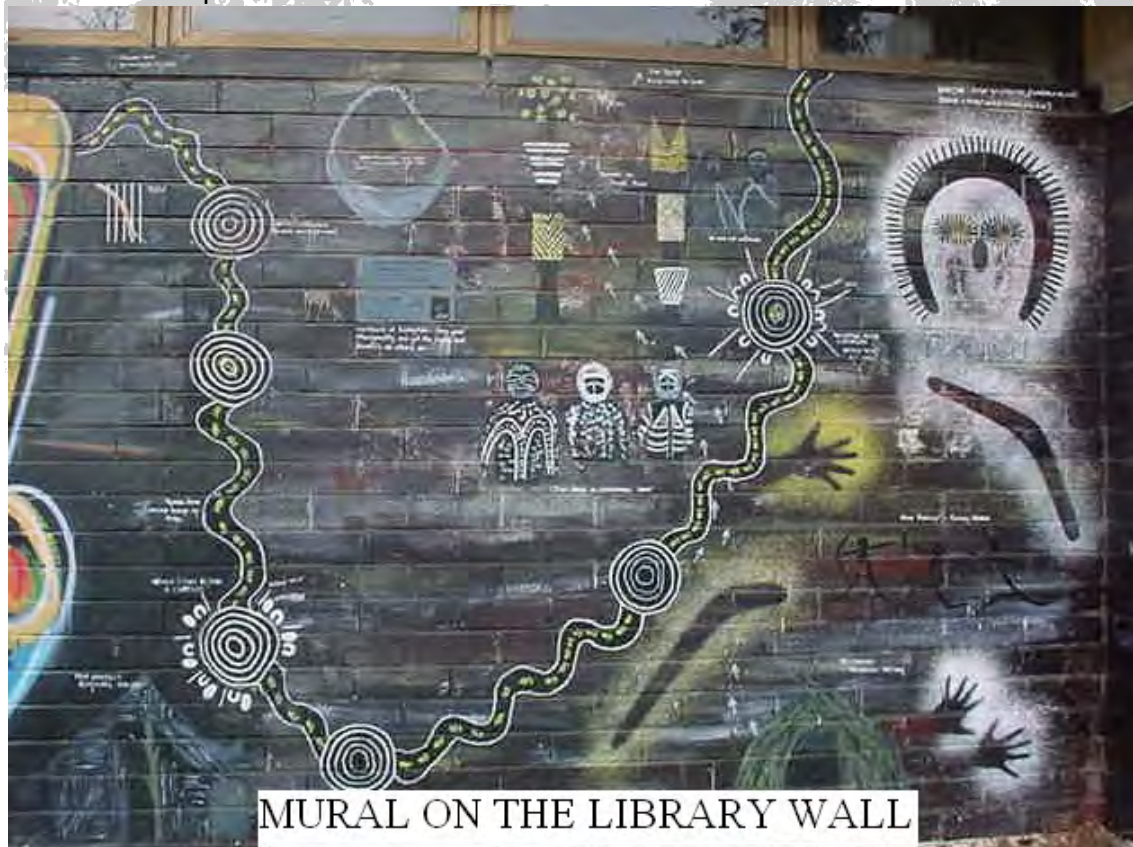
West Wing or Yellow block 1962

Egger or Red block 1971

Library or Green block 1978

M.P.C Officially opened 29 Nov 1985 by the Minister for Education  
R.M. Cavalier

The IT Centre opened 2003



The BER(Building the Education Revolution)federally funded building campaign for 2010 saw the conversion of Yellow Block kitchen and science lab into a commercial standard kitchen. A primary industries classroom was constructed in the farm plot and the metalwork room in Red Block was converted into a construction classroom. Work on these continued into 2011.

The Blue administration block has had many changes. The first clerical office was a converted hat room. The original science laboratory has gone. In the early days all male staff except the Principal occupied what is now Head Teacher Welfare office (old Languages staff room). The female staff occupied what is now the second Deputy's office (old clinic) and had been a Home Science staff room. The Deputy Principal's room was one where the girls had a change area to get into their white Home Science uniforms.

### **Rita Buckton Remembers when....**

Rita began cleaning buildings at the school on 14 September 1947, before that she had worked at the old Primary School. She retired in 1990, giving her 43 years of memories to reflect upon.

Her fondest memory **“the friendships and closeness I shared with the staff, we were like a family and still are.”**

Canoeing was a popular sport with Mr Ball. He seemed to collect cow pats from the children.

The library was on the top floor of Blue Block, now Languages room and had also been a Music room. It was moved to the West Wing (Yellow Block) and then to the Green Block. We had a lovely response from the librarian, **Myra Walton (1959-1972)** who saw the atmosphere of the school as her happiest memory. She thought the West Wing library was great... it is now the Staff Common room and Room 25. The Library, today run by Sylvia Murray, is fully computerised with computer catalogue, C.D Roms replacing some books and a huge floor area, a briefing room and areas for using personal laptop computers.

Work on the **West Wing (now called Yellow Block)** began on January 7, 1963 and it was occupied by pupils on Monday August 5, 1963 an incredible **7 months and 200,000 bricks later!** The old basement has lost the P.E. change rooms, toilets and armoury as in 1992 \$100,000 was spent to convert the area into a Technology Centre.

The Canteen is still there, but who can remember the old wooden canteen at the top of the driveway behind the Grieve's home? Favourite food of all time had to be **Stan's apple pies!** Speaking of memories, how about the grass at the front being a senior only area. The **Sun Dial** was rescued from here, represented to the school in 1986 and then moved for safety into the library.

The front has now been made a shade park, thanks to the efforts of Jenny Stout and the gum trees planted by Max Caban over 30 years ago. The tennis courts are now basketball courts, but in 1949 there were no oval, just trees. The school has a Landcare grant to re-establish trees and 1994 marks the beginning of this program.

The MPC was built in 1985 and opened by the Minister for Education - the Hon. Rodney Cavalier MP on November 29, 1985. The old wooden 1940's classrooms are still with us. They have moved around a little, but now rest in their final places: Drama/ Dance Studios, Pottery and Kiln Studio (Mud Works) which was developed by the late and highly talented potter and Head Teacher Kevin Flanagan, and the Museum and Farm classroom has been moved to become a Music classroom and studio.

## Speech Night

Was held in the Astra Theatre (where Wyong Village Central is now), then the Wyong Memorial Hall and from 1985 in our own school hall. In 1986 a literacy improvement program was introduced Drop Everything and Read, or D.E.A.R. Students begin each day with a quiet period of reading, the aim being to improve every students approach to their learning.

**The Lakes** magazine fell into an abyss from 1971 to 1980. Thankfully was resurrected by teacher Mark Baldwin in 1980. It is back in the abyss.

## Carl Martin's Shows from the 1980's

Annie Get Your Gun/South Pacific

Man of Steel/ Sheer Luck Holmes

Oklahoma/ Bats/ Smithy

**Steve McNeil's 1990's** Year 9 Are Animals/ Hi Tech

What fabulous opportunities these have given to develop the talents of hundreds of our students. How well we remember the bombers sending audiences to the floor in South Pacific, the Lorrae Van Kerkhoff and Ian Wagstaffs, the sinister Jud Fry (Robert Price) in Oklahoma, the backstage workers Maxine Morris and a while host of students who gained a moment of glory from their days at school.

Students were encouraged from other areas as well. In 1962 Shirley Preston won the Softball award for "the Best and Fairest Player." Her parents donated a perpetual trophy to encourage softball. When Stan Preston died in 1972, the trophy was changed to the **Stan Preston Memorial Trophy**.

Perhaps the best method of research has been to talk to those who were there. John Walker-Smith (Jack) had a great deal to offer us. He spoke of the requirements that male staff has to wear long trousers, coat jackets, coats, shirt and tie. On a hot day they were allowed to remove their jackets. Jack designed the school badge and house emblems. Indeed I can remember my first day in 1975 when Derek Foster reminded staff of the need to wear a tie. The boys in 1949 had no uniform, and many did not wear shoes. Jack remembers the request of Bill Gollan that boys wear shoes and socks to school "even if it's only sandshoes."

We celebrated 40years of education in the buildings on this site in 1987. Then 50 years and now 60 years in 2007. This was the year in June, Wyong High was flooded along with the rest of the Central Coast. Several staff were awarded the Premier's medal for their efforts in keeping students safe during the unprecedented deluge.

## Cec Dwyer

He once described the school as "the Elephants Graveyard" but Cec Dwyer is our longest serving Principal.

## **Save Wyong High School (from being traversed by the Sydney Newcastle Freeway) (A copy of the information from the day)**

### **Wyong High School 1972**

The Wyong High School buildings stand in a beautiful playground with a creek frontage. The playground contains a fine stand of ironbark and associated species of trees ideal for ecological studies in geography and science. It is used as a cross country running track and the creek front is used by canoists. The forest is the home of a community of bellbirds and provides an excellent backdrop for the school. In a growing area like Wyong, the playground as it is provides room for future expansion.

### **The plan**

The department of education has transferred 37 per cent of the playground to the department of Main Roads. This 37 per cent contains the forest and the creek front. Across this section the six lane Doyalson/Ourimbah tollway is to be built. Apart from the destruction of the environment involved, a leading acoustics engineer has warned that noise will make ordinary school, once the expressway is completed because it will pass within 75 feet of the school buildings.

### **Alternate route**

The presently planned route is puzzling in that it takes a wide sweep to include the school grounds in its path. A top civil engineer has prepared alternative plans for the tollway. This plan uses a route slightly further west of the school, missing the school playground altogether. This route has been costed at only approximately \$200,000 more than the department of Main Road route.

### **Hypocrisy**

As far as teachers, students and residents of Wyong are concerned, insult has been added to injury by the recent campaign of the Department of Education and the Department of the Environment in which schools have been deluged by appeals for teachers to take a more active role in educating students about the environment – e.g., a “reduce motor emission campaign” at present underway and a “grow more greenery” campaign launched on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1972. This double standard where on the one hand the government appears to be encouraging preservation of the environment and on the other hand is taking deliberate steps to destroy a section of the environment is hard to reconcile.

**The freeway was relocated to a site west of the school.**

**John Buckle**

After some twenty five years service at Wyong High School as Head Teacher Social Sciences, John Buckle retired at the end of 1991.

John was an outstanding teacher and a strong, capable and effective leader. His personal qualities of being a very caring and happy person left their mark on all those who have had contact with him.

His final day at school saw him arrive in a stretch limousine and being greeted by a mass number of students and staff. This symbolic gesture was the school's way of thanking a teacher who had an excellent report with all students, not only in the classroom but also in the wider community.

John capably administrated the school finances, and was a strong management figure of running the school.

The welfare of the students was always a paramount concern of John's. His other passion was closely linked to this...the school environment.

In 1972 the Sydney/Newcastle freeway plans called for the southbound lanes to cut through the school. It was John who mounted a massive community awareness campaign to show the effective this would have upon the school. The proposed route of the expressway was altered, and the school was given a reprieve.

Next John moved to preserve the native bush area at the back of the school. Despite being thwarted by a dieback problem, John persisted and the area has since regenerated.

John always instilled environmental awareness in the students. This being before it became as popular as it is today. His former students are still active today in the battle to save the red gum forest at The Entrance.

John is a modest and achiever. He always put his students and staff before any personal gain.

## Oral history

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### **PETER CONVEY**

Peter Convey attended Wyong High from 1971-76. His favourite teacher was Mr Gary Wilmot who sadly died not long after he gave the students a farewell party. It is believed that he died of cancer.

One funny incident that Peter remembers is when one student fell off the Red block and the next day there was a body line on the cement. (See Rod Tudehope)

### **STEPHEN HARMSTON**

Stephen attended Wyong High from 1961-1964. His happiest memories were his days with the army cadets. His saddest memory was when his two best friends were tragically killed in a car accident.

The funniest incident he remembers was when he found a teacher and a member of the office staff down at the river together behind the Ag. Farm at lunchtime. His hangout was near the girls toilets where he ate a jam sandwich and drank orange juice.

### **JULIENNE LINDLEY**

Julienne, a student at Wyong High during 1969-73, was a great athlete especially at netball, basketball and swimming. Julienne's happiest memories were her friends and the worst thing she ever did was smoking in the toilets. Later in her life, she married one of her boy friends from school.

### **SANDRA FLEMING**

Sandra started at Wyong High in 1965 and finished in 1969. The Principal at that the time was Mr Laureson. Her favourite subject was cooking and she liked hurdling too.

The uniform she had to wear was a grey tunic, red buttons and a white blouse. In fact, Sandra got in trouble for having her skirt too short.

### **ROBERT SMITH**

Robert Smith, a student at Wyong High from 1970-1973 vividly remembers the freeway protest. Students marched down to the Council Chambers and told them what they thought.

Robert also wonders if he could collect his intermediate life-saving certificate which he passed, but did not collect. Good luck !

### **RODNEY TUDEHOPE**

This young fellow made history when he fell from the top of Red Block while trying to retrieve a tennis ball from the gutter. He survived, but the chalk outline of a body on the ground caused great concern until it was realised this was a hoax. Rod went on to put a black snake into Mr Horner's desk drawer. Nice try, but the snake bit him, so off to Gosford Hospital again.

Rod had a long suffering brother, Trevor. He had to live up to the Tudehope legend, which he did. Sadly Rod died too soon, leaving behind a young family and a lot of fun times memories for those of us suffered him, but admired his good nature as well.

### **JAMES MAMO**

If you were a student between the years 1974 and 1977 then you might remember James "Jim" Mamo. Jim's favourite subjects were English and Woodwork. He ran in the cross country for Baker house but his athletic abilities didn't stop there.

This enthusiastic sportsman also enjoyed participating in footie, cricket, gymnastics and basketball. This boy's energy wasn't always used for good though.

He took part in such devious activities as lighting fireworks in the main school building and didn't stop there. He also flew a pair of y-fronts from the flagpole. But his overall worst thing he ever did was as he said, "probably smoking".

### **MIDGE BUCK**

Midge was a student at Wyong High from 1954 – 59. Midge says that her happiest memory of the school was friendships. She also says that the school helped her life ahead.

The worst thing Midge ever did at school was help erase school work written on the board prior to class.

Midge went on to become a secretary and Mrs Midge Donaldson.

## **The Wall of Achievement Recognising the Talents of Wyong High**

Wyong High has produced diverse and highly successful young men and women. The Wall of Achievement is located in the School Library and it recognises the achievements of so many people over the years. The Wall serves as an inspiration to current students and staff.

Each year new people are added to the wall as part of our annual Presentation Day.

On the Wall you will find **Mark Skaife** born in 1967 and is a five time winner of the V8 Supercar Championship Series and has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to motor racing and charity. Mark set a world record of 277.16 kph for a production ute at Woomera Prohibited Area.

Also there is **Joshua Horner** born in 1979, international choreographer, dancer and TV personality. Josh has performed on Broadway, New York in "Billy Elliot", London's West End in Billy Joel's "Moving Out". He was nominated for a Helpmann Award and won an **Australian Dance Award**. Joshua has choreographed "The World of Colour", "ElecTRONica" and the Sounsatonal Mainstreet Parade for **Disneyland** California. In 2011 Josh became the new judge on "Dancing With the Stars". He also starred in the Australian tour of "A Chorus Line". Joshua is the face and ambassador for Wyong Council's new \$12.5 million flagship performing arts space, "**The Art House**" opening in 2015.

Josh also works with another ex-student **Jo Cotterell** at the Coast's largest Dance and Performing Arts Facility, **Lee Academy**.





WYONG HIGH SCHOOL  
WALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

**Where did it all go ?**

In 1949 a track led from the main gate to the front school. A ridge ran northwards from the school to the road. Imagine the setting...no cars just beautiful stands of ironbarks and spotted gums. Then the roadway was built, using rock crushed by a heavy concrete roller. Mr Ireland had teams of boys labouring on this task. The ridge began to disappear. The top section was flattened to provide an area large enough for two tennis courts. The area now has the basketball courts.

**The front oval** was constructed by council bulldozer divers practising their skills under the direction of the Shire Engineer, Mr Downes. Years later the retaining walls were built. The road to the canteen was lined with pine trees.

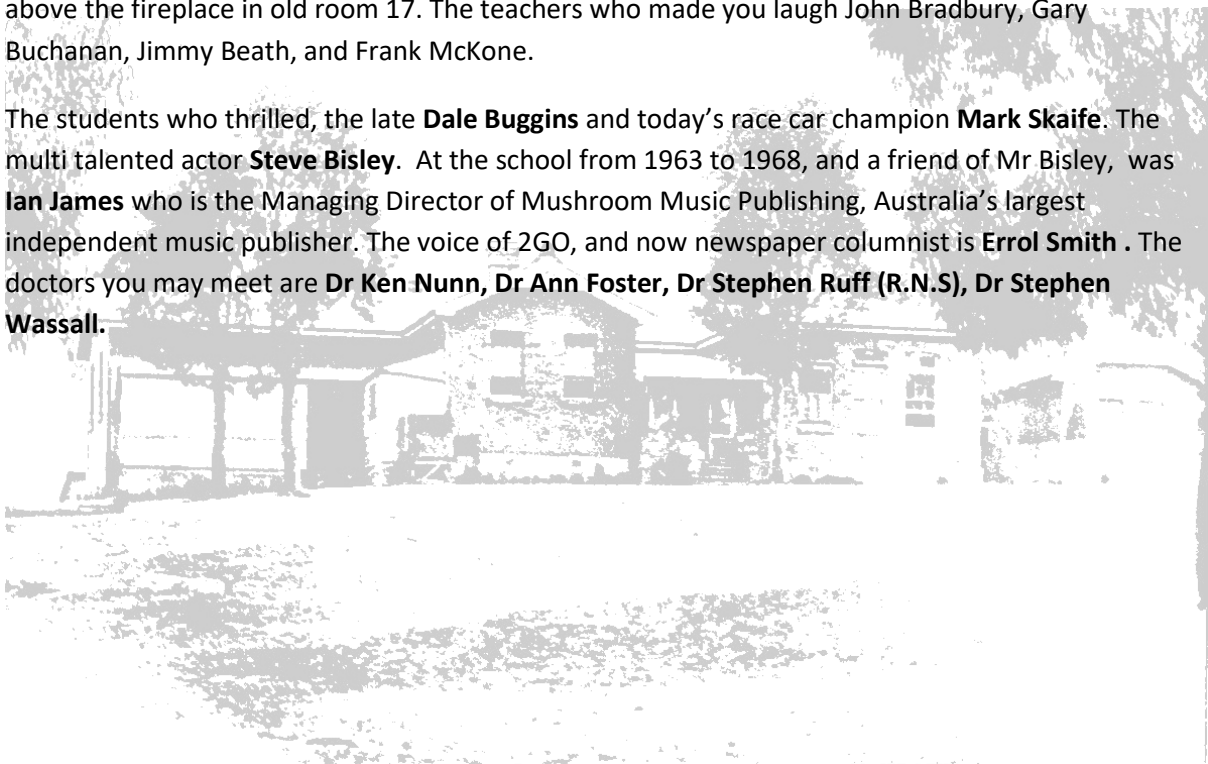
**The most tragic loss was the great stand of ironbarks.** These were removed “free of charge” in a deal work out between the Department and a sawmiller. Great fires burned for weeks in the school grounds, as the branches and unwanted parts were reduced to ash.

**A nature reserve** is all that remains today. This area is gradually being rehabilitated and is a focus for programs as being carried out by these Year 10 students. The school has also intimated a rainforest renewal project at Wauchope in the grounds of Timber town.

**What were the students like then?**

**The girls wore over the knee, box pleated navy blue serge tunics, with white blouses, dark stockings and black shoes.** A succession of girl's supervisors followed the standard set by **Mrs Meg Walsh** who ran dress parades. For the boys it was almost impossible to say there uniform. Headmaster Gollan worked on getting those without shoes into shoes. The Wyong Roos Football club donated the green jerseys for the school football team. They even took the field without shoes... even goal kicker "nuts" ball. You could never forget "the giant" **Olaff Prattel** who went on to play Balmain, or more recently, **Steve Carter** joined Penrith club. **Then came the decision.** The boys' uniform was to be **gray trousers and socks, and blue shirts. The girls also gained a new uniform.... grey with red buttons, and in much lighter material.** The World's Fastest Boy over One Mile was held by one of our students and we have a young girl with us now who was destined for fame (Rosemary Hayward). Jack Mumford coached several top class athletes. **Sue Woods & Sandra Van Stappen** were world class canoeists. High flyers such as Rod Tudehope's fall from the top of Egger (Red) block. Paul Hatton imitating an Indian and fighting himself. "Mobby" the cat skeleton hanging above the fireplace in old room 17. The teachers who made you laugh John Bradbury, Gary Buchanan, Jimmy Beath, and Frank McKone.

The students who thrilled, the late **Dale Buggins** and today's race car champion **Mark Skaife**. The multi talented actor **Steve Bisley**. At the school from 1963 to 1968, and a friend of Mr Bisley, was **Ian James** who is the Managing Director of Mushroom Music Publishing, Australia's largest independent music publisher. The voice of 2GO, and now newspaper columnist is **Errol Smith**. The doctors you may meet are **Dr Ken Nunn, Dr Ann Foster, Dr Stephen Ruff (R.N.S), Dr Stephen Wassall.**



**EARLY WYONG AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL IN 1888**

The township of **Wyong**, on the Central Coast of New South Wales, came into being in 1887. Less than one hundred years after European settlement in Australia (1878), there was a village of 7 to 8 houses in Wyong on the traditional lands of the **Darkinjung people**. The colonial government made grants of this land to selected people, such as **Charles Alison** as the local Aboriginal people had lost their rights to land. Many Aboriginal people in the region died as a result of introduced diseases such as smallpox.

From 1887 to 1889 the Sydney to Newcastle railway line was completed. Trains came to Wyong in 1887, but the linking bridge across the Hawkesbury River was not completed until 1889. The railway station and the township were established on Charles Alison's land. It was Mr Alison who wrote a short note to **The Department of Public Instruction** in December 1887 seeking an application form for the establishment of a school. His estate manager Joseph Ranken organised the filling in of the form by the parents. At this time, it was very rare for the Department to plan and establish schools.

The completed application form was dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1888. It was sent to the local Member of Parliament the Hon. Richard Stevenson. Mr Ranken wrote a cover note explaining that the form:

*“Signed by the parents of children living about here whose children are unable to attend through the long distance and bad roads, any other school. As our Respected Member in parliament we trust you will bring this before the Minister for Public Instruction at once as our boys and girls is going Wild for want of a public school about here.*

*We have got forty (40) names on the Rool but there will be a lot more Children coming here shortly as the Fishermen of Lake Tuggerah are bringing their families here to live. Their houses are going up now.*

*You sir know your self how our population is increasing within the last six months and you will be able to point out to the Minister that the school is wanted at once.*

*Mr Alison has offered the land to the department to build a school on or will Build them a place himself and rent if the department wishes (so there is no excuse).”*

The application form contained the names of 40 children who would attend the school, although a few were only two or three years old. Some children were attending Kangy Angy

School (opened in 1878), but as the letter indicated, it was some distance from Wyong (3.5 miles) and the tracks through the scrub were impassable in wet weather.

The next nearest school was Wyong Creek, known as Wyong Creek Lower (opened 1883). Some of the parents had farms of their own, while others were Alison's tenants. Two of the men taking responsibility for the establishment of the school, William Fishburn and James Scanlan, were railway gangers, while Robert Izzard was an innkeeper.

In accordance with the usual practice, the department sent the local inspector, William McIntyre, to examine the situation at Wyong and to see whether a school was needed. His report written June 5<sup>th</sup> 1888 read:

*Wyong is a new and promising township on the Northern Railway, about 63 miles (95km) from Sydney and 40 from Newcastle. It has a railway station. The district is rich in coal, timber and fish; and a large population is likely to settle in the locality. There are two saw mills, about 30 fishermen, and a coal mine is likely to be opened. Within two miles, there are 20 families, and about 40 educable children. The average will be about 26 to begin with, sufficient for a 9<sup>th</sup> class school.*

Since an average of only 20 pupils was required for a Public School, McIntyre had no hesitation in recommending that the application be granted. It would also be possible to open the school almost immediately in temporary premises.

Mr Ranken offered (on Alison's behalf) to rent the Department a building for five shillings (50 cents) a week. This building was **Watts Concert Hall** and it was used each month for Church of England (Anglican) services. It measured 24 feet (8 metres) by 18 (6 metres) and was in good condition. The necessary furniture, equipment and textbooks could be quickly obtained from a temporary railway camp school at Woy Woy, which had just closed (as the railway line was complete).

## WYONG PUBLIC SCHOOL OPENS

2<sup>nd</sup> July 1888

The Department accepted all McIntyre's recommendations, and moved with surprising speed to get the school opened. The first teacher, **Mr William BERRY**, was appointed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1888, and he opened Wyong Public School on **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1888**. This was the day schools resumed after the two week mid-winter vacation (in the old 3 term school year).

#### Alexander William Berry (1863–1932)

Alexander William Berry, the town's first schoolmaster, was a teacher in the Wyong area for about twenty-three years.

He had the distinction of being the first teacher ever to be appointed to the Wyong Creek School when it was opened in 1883; and the first teacher in charge of the Wyong Primary School when it was opened; and he was our first show president.

Berry was born at Waterloo in Sydney in 1863, his father being a mining engineer who had migrated from Yorkshire in England.

Later he lived at Hamilton and was educated at the school at Wickham.

While stationed at Wyong Creek in his younger years he would ride all the way to Hamilton and back over every second weekend on his horse called Diablo, a return journey of some one hundred miles, to visit his mother.

On June 28, 1889, he married a local lass, named Charlotte Bradley whose father was once a sawmiller at Brush Creek specialising in the cutting of fellies which were used in the making of wooden wheels of many kinds—for bullock waggons, sulkies, buggies, carts, etc.

The marriage took place at the St. Silas Church of England at Wyong Creek, which had been opened on March 24, 1886.

It was on the site of the home now occupied by Mr and Mrs John Gear at the apiary, but was removed from there nearly sixty years ago.

Berry was transferred from Wyong to Gladesville at the beginning of 1906.

After serving at Gladesville for about fourteen years he was (according to family records) appointed as the first headmaster at Cremorne, a Sydney suburb; and retired from there.

At Wyong he played regularly with the local cricket team, usually as opening batsman. In later life he played bowls regularly and was a member of the Ryde Bowling Club.

He died in 1932 and was cremated at Rookwood.

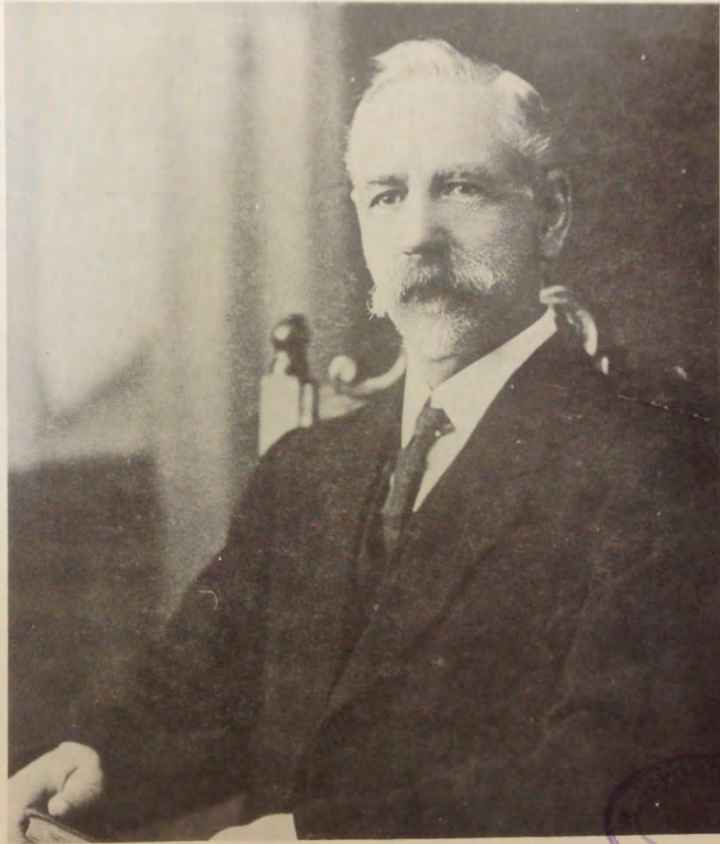


Photo: Mrs. D. Barnett, Wahroonga

Mr Berry began his career at the age of 19. His training was to observe lessons at a large Public School. He was the first teacher at Wyong Creek Lower School. He studied, sat examinations and was inspected to be classified as a teacher. He was highly regarded when he transferred to Wyong from Wyong Creek.

McIntyre selected a two acre school site on Alison's estate. It was situated on a reserve for public buildings, which Alison had set aside in drawing up the sub-division plan for Wyong township. This was the standard school site size in the nineteenth century (C19th).

McIntyre also persuaded Mr Alison to allow a 200 feet (70 metre) frontage to the main road. This road is Alison Road, and the road to the side is Ranken Street.

The site was worth 300 pounds (\$600), but as McIntyre explained on 3<sup>rd</sup> July:

***Mr Alison is willing to give this land as a gift for school purposes, provided that his offer is accepted within one month, that the Department pay the cost of survey and erect school buildings thereon (value for 800 pounds or \$1,600) and McIntyre persuaded Mr Alison to extend the next condition from 6 months to within 9 months from acceptance of his offer (to build the school).***

This was a very generous offer on Alison's part. The site on the hill overlooked all of Wyong. He was also very clever in that schools were often temporary, and wooden. It was not uncommon for a year or two to pass while plans were drawn up, tenders called and buildings erected. Funding could also be delayed. Alison's gift sped the process up, ensured Wyong School was built in brick, and opened in 1889. One hundred years later the gift of the land by Charles Alison halted plans to sell and re-develop the Alison Road site. It remains in public hands today for this reason.

## THE SCHOOL IN ALISON ROAD WYONG

2<sup>nd</sup> May 1889

The building of a brick building was expensive for the Department. McIntyre recommended a schoolroom to accommodate 80 pupils, plus a classroom for 40. He also recommended a brick teacher's residence of five rooms plus kitchen.

He based his recommendations on the bright future for Wyong. He noted the day before in the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, the formation of the Wallarah Coal Company was announced, and this mine was near Wyong on Alison's estate.

The Department's Chief Inspector Maynard was less generous. He deleted the classroom and reduced the schoolroom to accommodate 50. He did agree to the residence. The Department's architect drew up the plans. The schoolroom was 32 feet (11metre) by 18 (6 metre) with "sitting accommodation" for 60 pupils, "floor space" for 72 but "air space" for fewer than 60.

The plans went on view for tender in August 1888, but the local MP Richard Stevenson wrote to complain the proposed building would not meet "*the rapidly growing requirements of the place*". McIntyre pointed out there were already 50 pupils enrolled, and the original plan was accepted.

Alison's deadline expired on 10th April, 1889. The Department had to quickly amend the plans and call tenders again. November 1888 the tender of the Sydney based company Louis Le Breton for a cost of 1149 pounds (\$2,298) was accepted. This was not the lowest bid, but it promised completion in 5 months as opposed to 6 months.

April 16th 1889 the buildings were declared ready. **Berry moved the students in on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1889.** Alison's deadline had not been met, but he made no protest. He had his school.



Mr Berry was not married, and once the teacher's residence was built he would be replaced by a married man. In March 1889 he advised the Department that he had been anxious to marry for the past six months, but he could not do this as he had nowhere to live. He wanted to marry in the mid-winter vacation, and sought the Department's permission to marry then, and to also move into the completed residence so he could furnish it and prepare it for his new bride. McIntyre gave William Berry a glowing recommendation:

*Mr Berry is a very industrious and trustworthy teacher. He manages his school with much success and gives much satisfaction to the parents. He has arranged to marry a wife in the course of a few weeks, and I would now recommend that he be allowed to remain in his present position as teacher at Wyong and to occupy the new school premises. No teacher can keep up so good an average at Wyong as Mr Berry, because no teacher would take so much trouble.*

William Berry married Charlotte Bradley, a local girl, just after the start of the vacation. When school resumed Mrs Berry taught the girls sewing, and attended to their welfare. This enabled William to receive a full salary for the first time.

The new Alison Road site typified a New South Wales School in the C19<sup>th</sup>. (Nineteenth Century).



There was a commitment to an ideal of extending education, keeping children at school to at least sixth class. Government funding would decrease for at least 10 years from 1891 as there was a severe economic depression in Australia. In the 1890's teachers' salaries were cut, many schools were closed and class numbers grew.





Wyong Public School, at play.

Pho



The schoolroom was around 13 by 7 metres, and had two windows at each end, four windows along one long wall and two doors and a fireplace on the remaining wall.

Four rows of long desks and forms were screwed to the floor. Three of the rows were raised on broad steps so that the teacher could see every pupil without difficulty. There were two blocks of desks 4 metres long and one block 3.5 metres long. The layout and furnishing of such a room, **designed to accommodate 80 or more pupils with two teachers**, was a clear reflection of C19th approaches to education.

Children were expected to sit passively absorbing, largely by rote, the basics of the **3R's** (**R**eading, **W**Riting, **A**Rithmetic) and quantities of elementary geography, European history and scripture. Whether they understood or enjoyed their learning was of little importance. Discipline was strict with a cane or ruler used as corporal punishment.

The smaller classroom at Wyong was designed for religious instruction by visiting clergy, and for withdrawing pupil groups for oral lessons or sewing. It had three very long forms on a stepped floor and could squeeze in 30 pupils. On the side of this room was a small wooden hat room, which was added later. On the other side there was a “lavatory” or washroom with four tin basins set in a bench. The toilets were at the back of the building, built over cesspits.

The playground was cleared and stumped, with “saplings growing here and there” to provide shade in future years. Later students planted the ironbark trees, and a retaining wall was built on the Alison Road frontage. In the 1990’s this was replaced by a new block wall, and pedestrian ramp.

## PUPILS TRAINED TO BE TEACHERS

The average attendance was always lower than the enrolment figures. In 1892 the average attendance was 50, even though education was compulsory in theory from 1880. Nevertheless, the 1892 numbers allowed Mr Berry to have an assistant teacher.

**Florence Richter**, who lived at Wyong Creek, **became Wyong’s first pupil teacher in June 1893**. She had just turned 14 and would teach all day, concentrating on the younger children, and either before or after school Mr Berry gave her instruction in the school subjects, and the art of teaching. She was subject to regular inspections, as was Berry, and she had to pass written examinations at the end of her four year apprenticeship. Miss Richter left the school when her family moved to Sydney in March 1895. For the next few years there were other pupil teachers.

In August 1897 Lilian Woodbury also from Wyong Creek became a pupil teacher aged nearly 16. She was there until 1902 and then her sister Olive took over until 1907. The girls were part of a small group who asked the local School Board (like a P&C Association) if they could be taught French on a Saturday in the schoolroom. They were “desirous of improving our knowledge of the French language”. The Department refused because there was payment involved. The Board was successful in getting a weather shed erected at a cost of 40 pounds (\$80).

## A NEW CENTURY: THE TWENTIETH ( 20<sup>th</sup> ) Century

The town continued to grow. In 1901 a single lane traffic bridge was built across the Wyong River. The States of Australia had joined to become a Commonwealth (Federation: 1 January 1901). The new Australian Constitution did not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as citizens of Australia. Indigenous children found it difficult to gain an education.

School enrolments were 150 in 1905 and 200 the following year. A second pupil teacher Herbert Boggs was appointed in 1903.



Mr Berry was transferred to Gladesville Public and the new **Principal for 1906 was Mr John Filshie**. He was given an assistant teacher as well as the two pupil-teachers. The 1889 building no longer was large enough. In 1905 Inspector Lobban also noted the Warner Estate was being rapidly sold and settled. Land owned by the wealthy Albert Warner was mostly east of the railway station where his office buildings with turreted rooftops (built 1915) still stand today.

A new classroom and verandah were added to the main building. The verandah was enclosed as a hatroom.

### P&C FORMED

John Filshie reported in May 1906 a meeting of parents decided to form a Parents' Committee. This is a very early example of such a body as Parents Unions had only just begun in Sydney schools in 1905. The Wyong parents offered to lop the tall trees in the playground, obviously the "saplings" left in 1888 had grown. They held over until a future meeting the question of celebrating Arbor Day and planting more trees. They also raised for the first time an issue which was to come up again and again at Wyong. This was the state of the playground, and in particular the problems caused by the school's location on the crest of a hill. A man was employed for a week with a horse and dray. His task was to shift rocks and

soil to make the ground less uneven, to fill the holes near the gates and to cut down the “saplings”.

The next plan for the school was more ambitious. It was to form three terraces between the school building and Alison Road. These timber retaining walls would prevent erosion and provide level grassed plots. While the plan was supported by Inspector Lobban, his superiors were unimpressed by the costs involved. They did however build extra toilets in 1906/7 and the cesspits were replaced by a pan system.

## A NEW EDUCATION SYSTEM

A feature of the new 1906 classroom was that it did not have a stepped floor. Lobban had criticised the old small classroom in both 1906 and 1907, asking that the gallery be levelled and dual desks installed. The room also needed to be enlarged and improvements were made in 1908 after Filshie complained that 65 pupils did not fit into the original 1889 classroom, that they often became ill and in October a child fainted.

So the 1906 room gained small size dual desks for the first class children. The 1889 room had the floor levelled and desks installed for the fourth class. The little room continued to have the old fashioned long desks and forms as the Department could not meet the State demands for dual desks.

It was not just the seating plan of rooms that was new. There was a new syllabus to be taught, and the school records show no complaints were made by school inspectors in the delivery of this.

Still by 1908 it was clear 200 children did not fit into the existing rooms. The size and layout of the rooms hindered the teaching of the “new education” system. The basic principle was that each teacher had a classroom and there was a maximum of 50 students per class. A new classroom on the western side of the building measuring 12 metres by 7 metres (36.5 feet x 21) furnished with seven rows of five dual desks was begun in 1908. This was completely inconsistent with class sizes of the “new system” as it allowed for 70 students but it went ahead. The school was repainted and repaired and works on the residence were completed by 1910.

## 1911 HEALTH SCARE PANICS TOWN

Early last century **diphtheria** was a disease which often proved fatal, and the occurrence of it could easily panic a community. This happened in Wyong in 1911, with the school being the centre of attention. In 1910 the new principal (**James Burrell**)’s daughter contracted the disease, and twelve months later she fell ill with it again. In the meantime an assistant teacher at the school had been seriously ill with the disease, and then her successor contracted it as

well. The final straw, in the eyes of the community, was the illness of the school cleaner's daughter, who had occasionally helped clean the school. Although the doctor was convinced that the school and residence were not the source of the infection, and that the house where both assistant teachers had boarded was probably the likely candidate, **most of the parents withdrew their children from the school.** The Shire Council called for the removal of the headmaster and for the Department to act on the school. On a Friday and Monday in August 1911 the school was closed for four days to allow cleaning, disinfecting and large quantities of sulphur was burnt in all the rooms.

Community relations improved when the Wyong Mutual Help Society was permitted by the Department to meet in the school once a week. In return, the society raised money to pay off the debt on the school piano, and by 1913 it was paid for. This society was more a literary, debating and musical organisation. It was still noted as meeting in the school in 1914.

### P&C TAKES ACTION

In 1913 the department received its first letter from the Wyong Parents and Citizens Association (P&C). It is not known whether the Parents Committee established in 1906 had remained in existence, simply changing its name, or whether this was a new body.

The P&C Secretary Mr Lyell Morris, raised two issues with the Department:

- The dangerously eroded playground
- The damp condition of the older parts of the school

Both complaints were followed up in this letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few weeks later

Sir,

Kindly allow me a small space in your valuable journal to bring before the public's eyes a deplorable state of affairs that exists in our little town which is situated not many miles from the metropolis.

At a meeting of the Parents and Citizens' Association of the above school some very plain talking was indulged in, owing to the terrible state of the school ground and building. As one enters the ground, which is situated in the fall of a hill, it at once shows the fearful neglect on the part of the department, and I might also say the representative of the district. The gateways are in a deplorable state since the beginning of the rainfall; in fact they are almost impassable, and the association at once decided to have them attended to at their own expense rather than their children should take the risk of injury to body and limb. The ground itself is nearly as bad, and is not in any way suitable for a school playground; in fact it is like most public buildings built in the country in the past - that is, placed on the worst available spot.

The building, which is of brick, although having a fair outside appearance, is badly constructed and as soon as one enters your first thought goes to the teachers and children, rather than your condemnation to the department for allowing such a sad state of affairs. In the infants' room there are 60 pupils. Out of this number 25 were away with bad colds, and of the balance only 10 were not affected with the colds.

This is due to the very unhealthy state of the building. The walls of the room are green with damp, and the must smell is scandalous. I cannot understand what the much-boasted Board of Health is doing to allow this, and no doubt they will rise to the occasion when the disease germs are sweeping the district with mortality. It seems incredible to think that living in this age of civilisation such a deplorable state of affairs should be allowed to exist.

I am (etc) signed A.R. Tuckett

Mr Tuckett's letter saw urgent repair work on the guttering in 1914, but most of the work was delayed because World War 1 began. Despite the war a drain was built across the playground in 1916, various areas were filled and gravel laid, and the fences and gates were repaired or renewed.

## WORLD WAR 1

1914 to 1918

The First World War had a great impact on schools. Australia was very patriotic in joining the British across the world. The Wyong Cenotaph was moved from Railway Square to the grounds of the school in the 1990's. The names of the fallen on this cenotaph show many of the ex-students of the school. One name, Ray Leslie Goldsmith (for example) died in 1914 age 20, and is buried at Anzac Beach Gallipoli. His cousin is also one who died in the war.

At school there were fundraisers and functions to support the war effort.



While the community mourned the loss of so many young men worse was to follow. All of **July 1919 the school was closed** and was turned into an emergency hospital for the victims of the **terrible influenza epidemic which followed the war. More people died across the world from this pandemic, (the Spanish flu) than in all of World War 1.**

Wyong suffered many deaths, particularly children, from the epidemic. Ten percent of male teachers had enlisted to go to war, and many died. This created a staff shortage and led to the re-employment of married women in a temporary capacity. (Once a woman married, she had to resign from teaching).

One such woman was **Margaret Quinn**, who had taught at Wyong as Margaret Fallon from 1909 to 1911. Margaret's husband had an accident and his leg was amputated. This made it difficult for him to work and support his wife and six young children. So although Margaret was employed as a temporary teacher in 1917, she continued teaching at Wyong until retirement in 1941. Mrs Quinn tried without success to become a permanent teacher. While discriminated against, Margaret was fortunate that she was not dismissed during the Depression years, as many women were, under the Married Women (Lecturers & Teachers Act) 1932.

Notable students include:

- Herb Bowcock, born January 1910 at Hope Street Wyong. His father Jim had a blacksmith and wheelright business on the corner of Hope Street and Alison Road
- Rawdon Henry(**Harry**) **McKinnon** student 1920-1925. Played first grade football, president of North Sydney Rugby League Club for 29 years. **Awarded a MBE** by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II in 1971 for services to the state.
- Donald McKinnon a rugby league player with both Sydney and Newcastle clubs

**Tim Farrell.** A highly successful local businessman, longest serving Wyong Shire Councillor (1962-1974). Mayor 1975-1983. **Awarded a MBE** by the Queen for service to the community.

**In the meantime problems arising from the sloping site came up again and again.** At some point, the gift of this land by Charles Alison is questionable. The solution was to build retaining walls. The council had excavated Alison Road leaving the playground exposed and the fences falling down. The walls were built in 1923 and a picket fence installed. Next job was to renovate the school and residence. From 1927 to 1929 three P&C Secretaries (J.A. Hand, S.Cowled and M.G.Wilt tried to speed this up. Additions and repairs were completed by early 1930. The old schoolroom was modernised to make two classrooms, and the 1910 wing was extended. **Then in 1929 electricity was connected to the teacher's residence. The town also was connected but the department refused to connect the school itself.** In 1931 town water was connected to both the school and residence. Finally in 1933 the playground was terraced, using the council grading plant and roller which was supplied free of charge. **Principal Arthur**

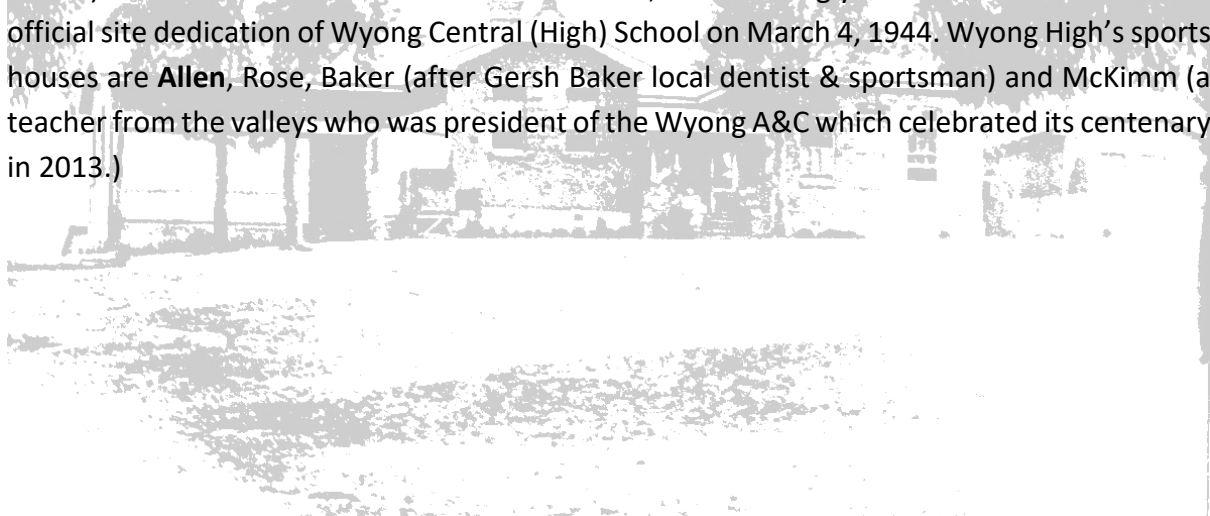
**Goodenough** reported in 1938 the terraces were eroding away, and he asked for trailing plants to stabilise the banks. He was allowed another teacher as enrolments were at 206. This brought the staff to five members.

**The P&C wanted to embrace technology, so they paid to connect the school to electricity and gave the school a wireless set to plug in to the new power source.** The year was 1938.

## WORLD WAR 2

1939 to 1945

During the war years trenches were dug in the lower level playground (the new terrace), and pupils had air raid practice. On one whistle, the children had to proceed in an orderly manner and hide in the trenches. The ground was mostly clay, so in wet weather shoes and clothes were dirty. Two whistles meant all clear, and the children returned to class. Because the school is on a hill, wardens sat on the roof to spot for aircraft. The railway was heavily guarded and soldiers were camping at the showground/racecourse. **Principal Llewellyn Allen** worked hard to see the 7<sup>th</sup> class had a school, Wyong Central School. He oversaw the purchase of land in Alison Road (Chapman's Paddock) opposite the local Member of Parliament (Mr D'Arcy Rose's) home. He died of cancer on November 1, 1943. Fittingly his wife was invited to the official site dedication of Wyong Central (High) School on March 4, 1944. Wyong High's sports houses are **Allen**, Rose, Baker (after Gersh Baker local dentist & sportsman) and McKimm (a teacher from the valleys who was president of the Wyong A&C which celebrated its centenary in 2013.)







In 1943 there were 33 secondary or 7<sup>th</sup> class students attending school. In 1944 this number rose to 136 students and they went down the road to their new school in 1946, with **Mr Roy Devine** as Principal. In 1950 the Central School became Wyong Junior High, then renamed Wyong High in 1952.



In 1951 the sports houses were formed and named after local Australian fauna, all common to Wyong: **Kookaburra, Wallaby, Platypus and Koala.**

Local icon Terry Wand was in 1<sup>st</sup> class in 1947. He remembers the school sports colours of brown and green, and Mr Paterson introducing inter-school sports: the boys played rugby league and the girls vigo and basketball. With numbers growing, local schools formed the Wyong Shire Primary Sports Association, and each year the schools would march along the Pacific Highway from Railway Square to the Showground/Racecourse to compete in a huge sports carnival.

Around 1952 the school formed a band and the P&C purchased a kettle drum, while students bought their own recorders. To the beat of the kettle drum and recorders, the students would march to class. This continued until the early 1980's.

Notable students from this era include:

- Peter Spencer 6<sup>th</sup> class 1941. Worked at Britstand Engineering, cadet engineer 1947 then in 1952 entered family clothing and haberdashery business established by his father in 1923. Worked with Joy Cant (student in 1930's). Spencer's store is currently a restaurant on the Pacific Highway (near the Chemist)
- Stan Morris class of 1941 was presented with Mr Keith Saladine's cane as he had seen so much of it, Mr Saladine gave it to him as a memento.
- Kevin Deaves (Road Runner Coaches and Apex Club), Roy Ferguson First Grade Western Suburbs, Dr Joan Levy, George Katsoulis a chemist, Colin Bishop a professional golfer, John Elder teacher, John and Robert Davies local automotive repairers and cranes, Errol Smith news presenter, Judge John Jones
- Max Levenspiel highly successful local businessman and property developer Max and Faye's children also attended the school. The completion of the Cutler Drive shopping precinct allowed for the road itself to be connected from east to west.
- Rodney Wicks, dux of Wyong High, local solicitor and President of Wyong Race Club
- Lyn, Jan, Ian and Peter Vaughan whose grandfather established Lakes Printers
- **1965 the school badge (in its current shape) was introduced after a competition to design it**

#### **School Captains of the 1960's**

**1963** Gregory Wicks and Joanne Fernance

**1964** Ross Dunstan and Robyn Fernance

**1965** Geoffrey Corrigan and Maureen Lee

**1966** Tony Sonter and Anne Ives

**1967** Peter Corrigan and Rosemary Clarke

1968 Peter Mitchell and Jennifer Smith

1969 Stephen Clarke and Genevieve Newton

## NORTH ROAD INFANTS DEPARTMENT

During the 1950's enrolments continued to grow. The two acre site in Alison Road could not be expanded, so a site of four and a half acres in North Road was resumed in 1953. Wooden demountable buildings were added to Alison Road, but in 1961 the decision was made to transfer the Infants School. A building containing six classrooms plus office, staffrooms and hatroom was occupied in May 1963.

The building was officially opened by the Member for Wyong, Mr Ray Maher on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1963.

The Infants department remained at this site until new classrooms were built at the Cutler Drive site after the primary department move there in 1979. The Infants site was represented by a Mothers Club. Before the Infants left the school site, the Wyong P&C wrote to the Minister for Education Mr Paul Landa on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1980. The concern expressed was that 818 Primary and Infants students were enrolled, and the maximum number the Cutler Drive site could hold with the completion of Stage 2 (Infants classrooms) was 630 students. The letter presented the following factors to support its questioning of demographic projections:

- The Sydney Newcastle expressway was due for completion 1984
- Electrification of the rail line to Wyong was due for completion that year
- The transport links would clearly lead to population growth
- Wyong Council had just released land in the new (now Watanobbi) estate
- The Housing Commission (now dept of Housing) was opening 30 homes within half a kilometre of the site and had plans for many more in the new estate

The letter was signed by the president of the P&C Mr Warwick Horner and was supported by the Mothers' Club president, Mrs Cherylynne Horner.

A deputation led by the P&C also met with the Minister regarding the pending overcrowding.

The temporary solution was to establish a new school to take the additional numbers. **The Infants School site was re-named Wyong Grove because of the stand of trees there**, and long-time resident Reg Atkins told us that **the last koalas in Wyong lived in those trees**. The other suggested name, North Road Public, was rejected by the Department. Wyong Grove opened in 1981. A library, canteen and in 2012 school hall were all added to the site. The school is scheduled for closure at the end of 2013, with many of the students transferring to Wyong Public.

## THE NEW SCHOOL CUTLER DRIVE

SEPTEMBER 1979 & JANUARY  
1981

Land in Cutler Drive was purchased and resumed in 1974-1975. It was lightly timbered and had been used to cut pit props for the mines in the past.

The decision was made that both Alison Road and North Road sites would close. The P&C held a farewell dinner on August 11th, 1979 and Mrs Lydia Downes and Mrs Julie Shatford (now Graham) were instrumental in a huge fundraising effort to equip the new school. It was a quantum leap from 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings to this state of the art school. Playgrounds and ovals had to be created.

**September 1979 the Primary department moved in.** To show how crowded it had been at the old site, a Year 3 class (taught by Mr Chris Swan) was using the Church in Ranken Street, and when a student fainted in the church, the teacher put water in the baptism font to cool his forehead.





The construction of the **Infants** classrooms then began, and in **January 1981 they moved in. Wyong Public School had not been united since 1963.** From 2013 they will be re-united again.

The Cutler Drive site had a hall, and this allowed the staging of student productions. One such was **Paradise Island, an operetta performed by Year 6 in 1982.**

The cement tile roof of this hall had to be replaced as it leaked. Major re-building of the foyer and canteen areas occurred in 2011-12 as a result of Federal funding called Building the Education Revolution.

### **School Captains of the 1970's**

**1970** Phillip Smith and Anne Tindal

**1971** Robert Lowcock and Cynthia Cook

**1972** Bernard Nunn and Sharyn Guihot

**1975** Adrian Adam and Sue Humphreys

**1976** Peter Jamieson and Wendy Fernance

**1977** Wayne Fernance and Lyn Smith

**1978** Stephen Wassall and Cathy Adam

**1979** Bryce Graham and Margo Levenspiel

The past 25 years, following the school centenary, has seen a **revolution in information technologies**. Computer rooms presented challenges of maintaining quality equipment, networking and internet connections. A computer room was established in 1988 and by 1991 there were 15 Apple computers. The Apple company had formed in a Californian garage in 1976 and began the sale of an experimental personal computer, Apple 1. The school library had 11,000 books in 1991. Personal computers became popular, and in 2013 I-Pads connected to WiFi were in wide use.

In 1979 colour television was becoming more widely used. Recorded information was on reel to reel tapes for both audio and visual. The 2013 classroom has flatscreen monitors, with the tape, then cassette, then DVD all being superceded by internet downloads.

The chalk blackboard (painted green from the 1980's for better vision), was replaced by whiteboards and felt tipped pens. In 2013 the rooms now have interactive whiteboards using internet downloads and projection technologies. Students continue to hand write some of their work.

An Opportunity Class (OC) was established at Wyong to cater for Gifted and Talented Students across the region.

## SCHOOL UNIFORMS

In the late 1940's and 1950's there is some evidence of a girls' uniform which was a blue serge tunic with three box pleats at the front. It was worn with a white shirt and tie underneath. This was replaced by a grey box pleat tunic which was worn in the winter months. The summer tunic had a grey and white check, and the boys wore grey shorts with a blue shirt. From 1978 the girls' uniform was changed to a Princess style dress with short sleeves. It had a Peter Pan collar with a short feature tie coming from under the collar. The material was a green and white check with a gold line running through the check. The boys wore a pale green shirt with grey shorts and socks. Their sports uniform was a gold T-shirt and green shorts, while the girls wore a gold T-shirt with a green wrap-around skirt. The current school uniform was introduced in 2005. It is predominantly green with a gold school badge on the front with gold stripes around the collar. **The school motto was changed from Truth and Loyalty to Personal Best.**







**The school has also survived 21<sup>st</sup> century disasters**

In June 2007 the Central Coast was subjected to a weather event which saw unprecedented rainfall. The subsequent flooding cut all roads, and pushed Tuggerah Lakes into flooding not experienced since the 1950's.

The school was badly flooded, and then the high winds brought down trees which demolished the COLA (Covered Outdoor Learning Area) in the assembly area. Repairs would be over \$2 million. Students' homes were also badly damaged along with infrastructure such as power supply. This was a traumatic time for everyone, and due to the widespread nature of damage, the repair process took over a year for the community to rebuild.

**THE HEADMASTERS (PRINCIPALS)**

Teacher	Date Appointed
William BERRY	28 June 1888
John FILSHIE	29 January 1906

James BURRELL	29 December 1909
George LING	March 1913
Thomas KING (relieving)	6 December 1918
Stanley SMALL	27 January to 7 March 1930
Roy GODFREY	10 March 1930
Arthur GOODENOUGH	9 July 1937
Llewellyn ALLEN (relieving)	4 December 1940
William HAVILAH (relieving)	July to September 1943
Stanley SMALL	September to mid December 1943
Roy DEVINE (Wyong Central/ High first Principal)	16 December 1943
Robert HARDEN	31 January 1950
Colin PETRIE	1 April 1963
Ruth SCOBIE	1 February 1966
Leo O'MEARA	27 January 1970
Keith CURRY	28 January 1975
Neville FOUBISTER	2 February 1979
William STREATER	29 January 1985
Dr Robert FERGUSON	28 January 1986
Tom WILSON	
Helen MacDONALD	27 January 1999
Graham HOLMES	28 January 2006
Roslyn DAWES (relieving)	15 July 2013
Todd MILADINOVIC	28 April 2014

## LONG SERVING TEACHERS

Mrs E.G. Harris, Mr Walker-Smith (who went on to Wyong High), Mrs MacDonald, Mrs J.Beath, Mrs M.Britt, Mr Bob Debenham, Mrs Harden, Mr Passlow, Mr Alan Sharpe, Mr Len Pascoe, Mrs Buck, Mr Viv Davenport, Mr John Clegg, Infants Principal Mrs Wendy Britten, Mr Gary Rees, Mrs Judith Wells and a special mention for teachers' aide Mrs Flo Dell.

Mrs Mary Cleary, sadly passed away long before her time.

### Who were your favourite teachers ?

Other school staff include: Mr and Mrs Dolbell, Mrs Harris, Mr O'Donnell

Some dates from the 1980's :

1987 the school rugby league team reached State knockout final

**1988 saw the celebration of 100 years of public education in Wyong.** Many of the older students returned to Wyong and revisited the old school in Alison Road as well as the old Infants site in North Road. A huge day was held on August 12th at the Cutler Drive site, and a plaque commemorating the event can be found outside the front office. The Local State Member of Parliament was Mr Harry Moore.





1989 the girls cricket team made the final 8 in the State

**1980's Captains included:**

**1980** Mark Gibson and Lucy Carniato

**1981** Steven Perry and Joanne Hitchcock

**1982** John Manning and Joanne Palmer

**1983** Simon Bishop and Debbie Austin

**1984** Tony Greentree and Lorrae Kirkhoff

**1985** Aaron Bishop and Angela Cheong

### 2013 and 125 years later

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> the school will host a celebration of 125 years of public education in Wyong. This will also include students from Wyong Grove and Wyong High Schools. **The Local member for Wyong, Mr Darren Webber MLA** has donated celebratory medallions for every student at Wyong Public and Wyong Grove Schools. The Wyong Public captains in 2013 were Jene Kroeger and Remy Tidy. Acting Principal was Roslyn Dawes. The school captains of Wyong High will also be presented with medallions.

Annual School Reports now map the progress of the school. In 2012 there were 390 students enrolled. The students predominantly are still from Anglo Australian backgrounds, but there is an increasing number of students representing a range of ethnic backgrounds. Included are Afghani, German, Italian, Maori, Tongan, Arabic, Chinese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Korean, Indian and Japanese. This represents approximately 11% of the student population.

17% of students identify as being of Aboriginal background.

From the beginnings in 1888 with 63 students enrolled and 36 being the average attendance, the figures for 1900 are 101 enrolled and 71 average attendance. In 1920 there are 220 enrolled with 149 average. 1930 numbers drop to 207 with 167 average. 1940 205 and 172. At the war's end in 1945 there are 269 primary with some 200 secondary students enrolled, hence the opening of Wyong High School. The 1950's saw a move to around 304 primary students, and in 1960 there were 359 enrolled with an average attendance of 327. Now we see significant growth. 1965 442 enrolled with 414 average attendance

1970 477 enrolled 465 average attendance

1975 553 enrolled 519 average attendance

1980 813 enrolled 746 average attendance

(Wyong Grove established 1981)

And 25 years ago from 2013, in 1988 there were 560 students enrolled and 510 average attendance.

**So how about your time at the school?**

Now is as good a time as any to reflect and perhaps tell your story. And if you are currently at school, then start collecting for the next 25 years due in 2038.



