



Carlton Community History Group

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 9

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State education in Carlton

In the mid nineteenth century, before the Education Act of 1872, education for children in Melbourne was offered in a variety of settings by a diverse range of providers. Although most children were enrolled at government-aided institutions, others attended private (independent) schools or those established by the various religious denominations. A few were educated at home by tutors or governesses and, at a time when schooling was neither compulsory nor free, some received no education at all.

The quality of schooling provided in those early days varied considerably. The buildings used were often makeshift, badly ventilated, inadequately heated and sometimes designed for other purposes. Many denominational schools, for example, were also used as churches, and it was not unknown for several classes to be taught in the one large room or hall. Often playgrounds were non-existent, especially in inner suburban areas like Carlton. In the 1860s, there were six officially recognised schools in the Carlton area between Rathdowne and Madeline (now Swanston) Street, and Faraday and Queensberry Street. Some of these were church schools and others National or Common schools. There were also many smaller schools, often run by women in their own homes. (continued page 2)



Grade 5 at Lee Street State School in 1912. (Photo courtesy Carlton North Primary School)

In 1872 all this changed when the colonial government assumed direct responsibility for the education of all children and young people in the colony. Victoria's Education Act of 1872 broke new ground. A new education system was put in place, based on the principle of free, secular and compulsory education. Religion was regarded as a source of conflict to be avoided in the new government school system, so government schools were to be secular with no teaching of religion. Schooling was compulsory and children were required to attend, because literacy, numeracy and educated citizens were regarded as essential for democratic government. Because education was free, the new school system proved very popular. In Carlton, school attendance increased by 50 percent following the Act. For example the Stockade School, now Lee Street State School, had over 400 enrolments in the first few weeks of opening.

The Education Act created a large centralised Education Department that had close control over classroom practice, and absorbed substantial public resources. The Department produced curricula, recruited, trained and assigned teachers, and built new schools. In the 1870s the largest education building program ever seen in this country began. The job of designing and managing the construction of these new schools throughout the state fell to the colony's Chief Architect and Surveyor, Henry Robert Bastow, who managed the construction of 615 new schools in just five years.



The Faraday Street State School, which is still serving the Carlton community as the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre. (Photo: State Library of Victoria)

Despite these changes and developments after 1872, children's experience of schooling was still not very pleasant. Things were harsh by today's standards, with large classrooms and many children, long bench-like seats, and rote learning. Subjects taught included arithmetic, reading, writing, grammar, geography, drill, needlework and algebra. There was a weekly fee for Latin and Book-keeping. It was not until the latter decades of the century that primary and secondary education were regarded as distinct stages of tuition and conducted in separate institutions. Today there are four State primary schools operating in the Carlton area, and one State secondary school.

Interested in local history? Then join us in the Carlton Community History Group and help preserve our past for the future.

Are you interested in working on any of the following projects?

- Researching your own family history as it relates to Carlton;
- Recording oral history, stories and recollections of former residents;
- Helping with a book of personal recollections of Carlton;
- Researching topics for future editions of this Newsletter;
- Helping to maintaining our Facebook page;
- Publicising the Group and its activities;
- Seeking grants to fund specific projects.

Sounds interesting? Then contact us to see how you can be involved.

Email: cchg@y7mail.com Website: www.cchg.asn.au

Local History News

Digitising the records of Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes

Thanks to philanthropic and government funding, the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria has since 2003 been digitising the records of Victoria's Mechanics' Institutes and Mechanics Halls. To date, the extant records of more than one hundred Institutes had been completed, and they are keen to find and digitise more. These records are now available at the Mechanics Institutes' Resource Centre, which is based at the Prahran Mechanics' Institute, 39 St Edmonds Road, Prahran. For more information contact the MIVic at mirc@mivic.org.au or consult their website at www.mivic.org.au

Directories available on-line

The State Library of Victoria now has several searchable directories available on-line. Perhaps the most useful is the Sands and McDougall post office directories, which is now available for every fifth year between 1860 and 1974. Also available on-line on the State Library's website are: Melbourne street directories, 1912 to 1952; Robert K Cole Index of Victorian Hotels; Victorian Historical Journal, 1911 to 2012; AFL Football Records, 1912 to 2011; First World War unit histories.

Guided walks in the Flagstaff Gardens

Every Monday at 11am the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) runs guided walks through the historic Flagstaff Gardens in the city. The starting point is the RHSV's office at 239 A'Beckett Street, just off William Street. The walk takes 75 minutes and costs \$10. The RHSV prefers people to book beforehand, via phone 9326-9288 or email office@historyvictoria.org.au

History talks in Richmond

The Richmond and Burnley Historical Society holds monthly meeting at 2.30pm on a Sunday in the Richmond Library, 415 Church Street, Richmond. At each meeting there is a talk, as given below. Check their website for updates at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~rbhs/>

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| 27 May | Women in the First World War, Associate Professor Judith Smart. |
| 17 June | Making Women's History in Richmond for 40 Years (Women's Art Register), Dr Juliette Peers. |
| 15 July | Bridge Road history and its ghost signs, Robert Gray. |

History of St Jude's Church, Carlton

A history of St Jude's church in Lygon Street, Carlton has recently been produced. Called *People of the Risen King: a history of St Jude's Carlton 1866 – 2016*, it is available at Readings in Carlton. Reviewer Judith Biddington says: 'If you read this book, not only will you learn the history of St Jude's but you will gain an insight into inner northern Melbourne. You will learn of the changing life and times of Carlton – its unsewered streets, the bulldozing of crowded slums, the waves of immigration, the housing estates and the Lygon Street traders – and also of times of depressions and times of plenty, including the effect on the city of the world's richest gold rush'.

TALK ON LOCAL HISTORY

Victorian Architecture in Carlton - From Humble Abode to Grand Terrace

Kathleen Syme Library and
Community Centre
251 Faraday Street, Carlton.

Wednesday 20 June 2018, 6 to 7 pm

This Newsletter is produced and distributed four times a year. If you would like to be put on the mailing list, email the Carlton Community History Group at cchg@y7mail.com or visit our website www.cchg.asn.au

Carlton Community History Group, P.O. Box 148, North Carlton, VIC, 3054.

HISTORICAL WALK

Colourful Carlton – Cast Iron, Crimes and Controversies

Thursday 14 June 2018, 10am to 12 noon.

On this walk through the historic and interesting streets of Carlton you will see not only its beautiful 'boom period' architecture from the 1870s and 1880s, but also remnants of earlier eras, the 1850s and 1860s, before the cast iron terraces. You will learn something of its early history, its decline from a middle class suburb to a deprived working class area, some of the colourful characters who have lived in Carlton including its larrikins and criminals, the impact of Housing Commission demolitions, and more recent dramatic events.

Starts at Church of All Nations, corner of Palmerston and Drummond Streets, Carlton.

**This walk is run by the Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre
in conjunction with Carlton Community History Group.**

To register, phone 9658-8394, or email ivy.tran@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Innovative education in Carlton

The early years of the 20th century saw some innovative initiatives in education introduced in Carlton. Infant school rooms were established with the furniture and routines suited to the youngest children. New subjects were introduced in primary classes such as science, nature study, swimming, gymnastics and woodwork. In 1901 a Swedish method of teaching woodwork called 'sloyd' was started in Carlton. It aimed to teach boys not only physical skills but self-reliance, persistence, and creativity. In 1906 the Education Department bought what had been an old boot factory in a lane behind Arnold Street in Princes Hill, and boys from upper grades in the Carlton area came there for 'sloyd' classes. Girls were taught cookery upstairs. This building is now the Princes Hill Community Centre.

In 1915 the Education Department opened a training school for rural teachers in the grounds of the Melbourne Teachers' College (on the corner of Swanston and Grattan Streets, now part of Melbourne University) to provide trainee teachers with experience of the kind of schools where most would be sent to teach. In the early twentieth century 65 percent of Victorian schools were one-teacher schools in rural areas. The training school in Carlton had three classrooms with each having a range of ages. There was one teacher in each class who set the tasks for each group and gave monitors the task of hearing the younger children read, or recite multiplication tables. Most of the children had parents who worked at the University or nearby. The school had a uniform, which was unusual for a State primary school: a blue blazer, blue trousers or shirts for the boys, and checked blue and white dress for girls. The tie was red and yellow stripes. Past pupils remember how they played all over the University ground, and how strange they found transferring to schools with classes of children all in the same grade. A famous past pupil of the school was Olivia Newton-John. The school closed in 1969.

Some of the earliest initiatives to provide education for handicapped children occurred in Carlton. For example in 1918, the Yooralla Hospital School was established in Pelham Street by a voluntary agency to cater for children crippled by polio and other illnesses. In 1942 the school was taken over by the Education Department. In 1943 a classroom for partially sighted children was opened at the Princes Hill Primary School. Children came from all over Melbourne. The room had special lighting, and teaching materials were printed on a large print typewriter. When it closed in 1961 and transferred to Kew there were 34 students and four teachers.

Fire at Princes Hill High School

By Marian Turnbull

I lived in Arnold Street, half a block from the Princes Hill High School in 1970. It was a hot February night, and the windows were open. We woke in the early morning to a strange echoing click, click sound. From the front garden we could see light in the sky and the old nineteenth century school burning fiercely. The clicking sound was the roof tiles falling into the school ground and onto the footpath. The building could not be saved and had to be demolished. The students continued their education in portable classrooms on nearby railway land until a new architect designed school was built on the site, opening in 1973.



The main building of Princes Hill High School shortly after it was damaged by fire on 8 February 1970
(Photo Laurie Burchell, State Library of Victoria)

The old building dated from 1889, and for most of its life it was Primary School Number 2955. In

1924 the infant classes were moved to the present Primary School site in Pigdon Street. In 1942 the Arnold Street site was occupied by junior forms from University High School when their school was occupied by the United States military. In 1944 a Central School was established at Princes Hill, and in 1959 the Arnold Street building became a High School, The following year the senior primary students moved to a new building on the Pigdon Street site.

A Russian view of a Carlton school

In 1903 a Russian visitor to Melbourne was shown over a State primary school in Carlton, probably the Faraday Street State School pictured on page two. He saw several classes in operation and was not particularly impressed. One class that he observed had 50 pupils in it, half boys and half girls:

'A corpulent lady teacher greatly resembling a housekeeper (an impression enhanced by the pinafore she wore), with a long pointer in hand and a rather firm tone, began quizzing her ten- and eleven-year old boys and girls about Canada. One felt that things were proceeding entirely by rote. After this lesson, we went off to look at other classes. In some rooms, three classes were conducted at the same time, and the three areas were partitioned off only by light curtains; these were drawn back for common activities, for example singing'.

His general impression was of a mass of children being taught in uncomfortable conditions by a method of coaching and training, or in other words rote learning.

(From *Australian Journey 1903. The Travel Diary of Aleksandr Leonidovich Yashchenko*, translated from Russian by Peter Tilley, University of Melbourne, 2001)

Interested in helping research items for this Newsletter?

Each edition of this Newsletter has a theme - this one being on State education in Carlton. Ideas for future issues are welcome. If you have ever done any family history research, you will be aware of what fantastic resources we have available to research the past. These are the resources we use to research for this Newsletter.

Interested? Contact the editor Jeff Atkinson at jeffann@bigpond.net.au

Carlton Night Schools

With the introduction of the Education Act of 1872, schooling was made compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15 years. But there was a considerable cohort of children already in the workforce who had missed out on a basic education. This need was filled by the introduction of night schools on several nights a week. There was enthusiastic support for night schools, with *The Herald* of 12 August 1872 declaring:

Were the Carlton Nights Schools extended to other localities, the names of larrikin and still more odious larrikinism, would cease to be a 'household word' in the colony. The want of a suitable field for the superabundant energy of our youthful population enlarges the business of the police courts.

A free night school was opened at the Domestic Mission Sunday school room in Madeline (Swanston) Street, Carlton, in August 1872 for education of the 'poorer classes'. While the education was free of charge for the 50 to 60 enrolled pupils, rent, gas and incidental expenses had to be paid for and donations were sought from supporters of the night school movement. Within a year, night schools were established in Melbourne suburbs and beyond, some making use of existing school premises.

State School number 112, on the corner of Faraday and Cardigan Streets (now Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre, see photo page 2), hosted classes three nights a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, commencing at 7 o'clock. The night school catered for pupils under 16 years of age and offered the same curriculum as the day school. The *North Melbourne Advertiser* of 11 September 1874 reported that about 60 children attended the night school regularly, although there was accommodation for about 100 more. It added that: 'All children under 16 who are prevented by business from attending day school are gladly welcomed'. By August 1876, there were 300 names on the school roll, with an average attendance of 170 pupils. In the 1870s and 1880s, the Carlton night schools educated a whole generation of children who might otherwise have gone unlettered.

Did You Know?

The North Carlton Primary School in Lee Street, North Carlton, was built on the site of a former prison stockade and lunatic asylum. The superintendent's residence was a double-fronted bluestone cottage built near the Canning and Yorke (later Lee) Streets corner. When the cottage was demolished in 1913, the workmen discovered several underground cells, which were thought to house convict servants during the stockade era. That was over 100 years ago, but the rumour persists that there are cells beneath the school principal's office.



For several years while the Princes Hill High School was being re-built in Arnold Street, Forms 3 and 4 were located in these portable classrooms on disused railway land in Park Street, Princes Hill. (Photo courtesy John Thompson)