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LOOKING BACK.....with Molly Schools (continued.)



Information from '85 Years in the Making' and my own notes.

To add a little more information on the early schools in the district.

The first teacher at No.1 School was Mr McLean who had 32 students in his care. For some time he cycled to and from the school until he was offered board with the Underhill family.

Miss Sandilands taught 18 students at No.2 School until December 1932. She was followed by Joe Bull who boarded with the Cooper family.

Mr Callahan taught 24 students at No.3 School and boarded a short distance away. In 1936 a school house was built for the teacher.

In the Group Settlement district of Hazelvale (groups 138 and 139) two schools were provided. Group 139 was known as Hazelwood and Mt Robert Danaher was the first teacher. The other school for Group 138 was situated on the corner of North Hazelvale and Hazelvale Road. The first teacher was Mr Jack Larson who had 50 students in his care. Quarters were provided for him but he preferred to board. He was followed by Mrs Wilkinson who was the wife of one of the settlers. (Hazelwood was actually the name proposed for this district, but there was controversy and Hazelvale was the decision).

Tingledale School (Group 116) was constructed in 1925. Fifty children were enrolled when the school opened in 1926 and the first headmaster was Mr Boxall.

In Kentdale (Groups 105 and 110) the school was built in Parker Road in 1924. Early teachers were Mr Bill Speering and then Miss Merle Silver (who later married Ken Swallow).

Fast forward to 1949 when No.2 School closed and the Education Department constructed a centrally located school in Swan Street in Walpole. No.1 School was relocated there and a new schoolroom and a verandah were added. A home for the teacher was built in Latham Avenue. Boyd Anderson from No.3 School opened this school at the end of 1952. Bill Williams from No.3 School temporarily taught the Grade 1 class in the Mission House in Vista Street. The school was officially opened in 1954 while Jim Collins was headmaster. Schoolchildren from Walpole, Tingledale and Hazelvale were catered for at this central school.

No.3 School teachers' quarters became part of the Southern Division Headquarters of the Forestry Department when it moved to Walpole in 1952.

The CWA purchased and cleared a block of land in Swan Street in 1949. No.2 School was purchased by the CWA and relocated there, and their headquarters

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were opened in 1952. It also became a meeting place for other associations in the town including the Infant Health Centre run by Sister Shotter.

Providing an education for the children of these isolated families was not easy... building materials, builders etc. needed to be found and then of course somewhere for the teacher to live... I could not help smiling at the fact that though quarters were provided for the first Hazelvale School Teacher, Mr Jack Larson, he preferred to board... could you blame him if he had the option of home cooking! Nothing was wasted in those early days (i.e. former school buildings were relocated for further use).

This information is only skimming the surface of schools in the area. There is a wealth of information in a book compiled by author/historian Bev McGuinness of Denmark.



*Settlers and children at Tingledale School in 1926.
(Picture courtesy Molly Smith)*

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