

1861 - 2011



*The History of
Bellbrae
Primary School*



Foreword

*A*s part of the 125th celebrations it was decided to write a history of the Bellbrae Primary School. We have deliberately taken the decision to try and reflect the personalities of the period. As far as possible we have tried to allow the newspapers and the letters of the day tell the story. In retrospect neither of us realised the amount of effort required. Hence the time allowed for writing the history has been far too short. We would have liked to have had more time to research some of the more interesting aspects of the history such as the reason for the change of name from Jan Juc to Bellbrae but such was not to be the case. This account should therefore not be considered as complete but rather a base which can be amended and added to over time. We would like to thank all those who so generously assisted in providing material for the history. We hope that the history, such as it is, will assist in making the 125th celebrations a success. We hope that what we have found will be of interest and that one day someone will find the time to write the history of Bellbrae itself.

Joan Duval

Hugh Moore

25 years have now past since this book was first put together. We are now celebrating an amazing 150 years of Bellbrae Primary School. This updated book now covers not only the first 125 years but also the next 25 years journey that our wonderful school has taken.

Graham Bayles

Deborah Shanhun

Yvonne Sumner

The history of any school is inexorably linked with the community it is a part of. The development of the community has a direct influence on the school. This linkage is particularly close for a small rural primary school as the school often becomes a focal point for the community. The development of rural areas can often be reflected in the history of their primary schools. So it is with Bellbrae.

Early Settlement

In August 1835 John Helder Wedge, former Assistant Surveyor-General in Van Dieman's land led a party of Batman's Port Phillip Association from Indented Head through the district. He recommended the area for its grazing and timber potential. An ironbark forest existed from about what is today Freshwater Creek through Bellbrae to the coast. The Bellbrae area was originally called Jan Juc and was changed to Bellbrae in 1922. The name Jan Juc means, in the language of the tribe of local aborigines in the area at the time, a forest of iron bark. It is believed that the natives of the area traded the iron bark shafts from the Jan Juc forest with other tribes throughout Victoria, receiving in return items in which the area was deficient. In 1839 the Gundry family arrived and took up land along both sides of Spring Creek, from the present Torquay township to Forest Road and Paraparap in the hills. During the 1840's the Gundry and Tait families held pasture licenses around Jan Juc with other license holders, towards Breamlea, Mt. Duneed, Moriac and Paraparap. The Crown began selling land in 1857 and the first blocks were purchased by Joseph Gundry and WM. Bell. In 1857 Joseph Gundry, Manager of the Iron Bark Station, commenced a school in a small wooden room attached to his home, as there was no school nearer than Geelong. This school was for the Gundry children, and other people paid to have their children taught with them. The township continued to grow with more farms and homes, and two churches.

At the time Victoria had denominational schools which were established by various religious denominations and national schools which were designed to be of benefit to all denominations on equal terms.

In early 1861 when Mr. Gundry built a new brick house, the people of the area decided to employ the same builder; Mr. James Hill, to erect a brick school along Spring Creek. Jan Juc School was therefore opened on the 26th August 1861 as a national school with 35 children. The first national school established in Australia was in 1849 and by 1861 at the time of the establishment of the national school at Jan Juc there were 181 national schools in existence in Victoria. The Geelong Advertiser described the opening, in what would probably be regarded today as sexist terms, as follows:



James Hill

Spring Creek Jan Juc National School

This improving district was enlivened on Thursday, the 26th Instant, the occasion being the opening of the first national school in this district, which was inaugurated by a social tea festival, and when it is considered that a year or two ago the principal residents of the district were the kangaroo and the wombat, and on this occasion about one hundred and fifty farmers and residents met to qualf the social 'That cheers but not inebriates; it speaks well for the progressive nature of the district.

The spot chosen for the demonstration was a beautiful spot on the banks of Spring Creek. The company was

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A reunion of Jan Juc Scholars. The old school shown in the background.

accommodated under a spacious marquee provided by the school committee for the occasion, and tastefully adorned with festoon of native shrubs and flowers. At one of the marquee was a raised platform an thereon a rustic chair for the accommodation of the worthy Mayor, W Bell Esq., who presided. The chair was ornamented with evergreens and flowers. At the extreme end of the marquee were represented certain diagrams from the pencil and brush of Mr. Hall, illustrating (shall we report it?) the ancient method of punishing scolds, a delicate hint we presume to married folks and aspiring longing ones if they would prosper at least in that district they must pull together if they pull at all. The following is the order of the proceedings: after full justice was done to the very excellent repast provided by the ladies of the district, the music being presided over by Messrs Bartlett, Grove and Beevil.

His Worship briefly expressed his delight in seeing so many present on this interesting occasion, and especially so many of the fair sex; and he was flank to admit that if they put their shoulder to the wheel, very little was wanting. He was happy in stating all the funds necessary were subscribed, a school master appointed, and everything augured well for the prosperity of the school if the families increased in the same ratio in that part as they had done in the last two years.

The following programme was then gone through - Music 'Beauty Upon the Mountains'; a lecture by Mr. Hall upon England as she was, and he related some anecdotes illustrative of his own diagram, much to the amusement of the audience; music, 'Promised Land'; address, Mr. Hill; music, 'Fall of Babylon'; address, Mr. Bartlett; music, Alarm'.

Mr. Musgrove then moved a cordial vote of thanks to the ladies for their valuable assistance at the festival. Seconded and responded by Mr. Birch.

Thanks were then voted by acclamation to the trustees, Messrs Gundry and Butters, as also to the mayor for his presence on that occasion; and the proceedings closed by singing 'God Save the Queen' A very general feeling of satisfaction was expressed at the arrangement, and for a reunion of a similar character'.

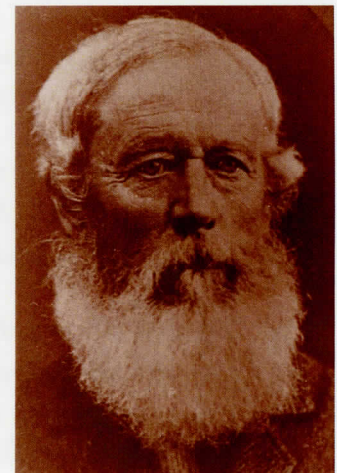
(The Shire of Barrabool was not in existence in 1861 and W.M. Bell was Mayor of the City of Geelong. WM. Bell had purchased two blocks of land at the original land sale in 1857 but whether he ever lived in the area is unclear.)



Early School Group pre 1900.

The site for the school was a block of land situated near Spring Creek. The land was probably not entirely suitable for a school as the land was uneven and sloped down to the creek. The bank of the creek was steep in places and parents were concerned when the creek was in flood that the smaller children would fall in. In addition it would appear that a road commonly used by the public actually cut across the school grounds. William Cook was the first head teacher and taught at the school for 16 years. His job would not have been all that easy teaching children of a variety of age levels, some of whom had not been to school before. In a letter to 'The Age' (undated) D. McKenzie described what life was like at the school.

"...The first person appointed teacher was a Mr. William Cook. His job was not an enviable one. Young men and women who had run gloriously through the bush were brought there. When the teacher tried to teach them there was more than one fight between them. It was an amusing sight to see small boys and girls who could read and write a little teaching others with whiskered faces to read and write. Several of them got married from school. Our family could read and write a little. We were taught by our parents out of their Gaelic Bible. The first books we had were called Sequels; then we had the Irish national schoolbooks. We always got religious lessons at school every morning, generally about Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Joseph going to Egypt for corn, and the Children of Israel. We were taught music and singing.."



William Cook

(There were no secondary schools in Victoria until after the 1900's, and so it was not unusual to find whiskered pupils in schools in Victoria at the time.)

In June 1862 the Common Schools Act was passed which was an attempted compromise between the denominational and national systems. Under this Act the name Common School would be used by all which

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received State Aid. The Jan Juc school became a vested Common School under the Board of Education and received the number 319 in 1863. The number of the school does not entirely indicate sequence of establishment as the number system did alter from time to time.

At some stage a school residence was also built but the date and details of the building of the residence do not appear to be available.

The school entered a period of decline during the 1880's both in attendance and in the physical condition of the school. The monthly average attendance of the school dropped well below the number of children attending at the time of the opening of the school. Attendance fell as low as 4, 50 in April 1882 the school was closed and the school residence was leased. The closure was only for a short period and in November 1882 it was recommended that the school be reopened.

The state of the school and the school residence continued to deteriorate in condition and the Board of Advice was continually writing to the Education Department about the poor state of repair of these buildings.

Unfortunately the pleas basically went unheeded. At one stage the Board of Advice indicated that the Education Department should buy the Independent Church which was situated opposite the school. This plan was not accepted by the Department because of the small size of the land area and because the condition of the church was little better than the school. So the complaints went on. In 1897 probably driven to despair by the condition of the school residence, the Head Teacher Mr James penned this plaintive letter:

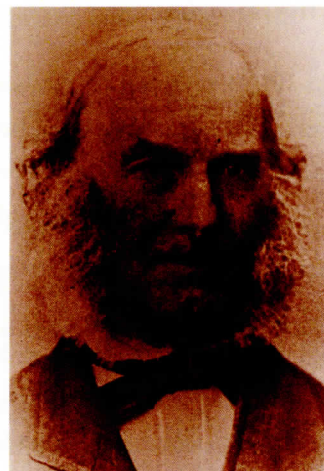
Sir,

I have the honor to respectfully ask when repairs will be done to the residence of the above named school so as to render it fit to live in?

I expected to find it fall in the storm of Friday night last week and hope to not put in such a time of anxiety again. The building settled a little lower on the south side during Friday night. Is it healthy to live in these rooms where the breeze is playing nightly through every chink and crevice and the floor-carpet rising and falling in time to the inrush of air? (and the house creaking with every wind). One tank is empty on account of the spouting: - and in to dry a locality? No springs here of fresh water: a rotten roof - panes of glass falling out of windows rotten with age - and many other faults - all for 15/- a month!

I have done a great deal to improve the property of the Department and amongst which was buying an oven for the kitchen.

The Building Inspector has long ago reported on this matter and I am not mistaken will show by his report that I have reason to complain. It would be hard to find a worse residence in Jan Juc, or one of so dilapidated in appearance. I never trouble the Department except when the case is urgent!



Joseph Gundry

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your obedient servant

J. James

Head Teacher

(The Head Teacher replacing Mr. James found no stove in the kitchen of the residence when he took occupancy.)

In 1906 the Board of Advice decided to build a shelter shed and asked that the Department met half of the cost. The department agreed and the Board of Advice held a concert to raise funds. The concert raised 7 pounds 9 shillings and expenses were sixteen shillings and 6 pence. A shelter shed was duly constructed but the Department only provided its share after some correspondence by the Board of Advice.

The basic state of the school remained unchanged, however; on the 15th November 1907 George Imer wrote a letter to the Department of Education which stated in part:

"This floor has been down since the school was erected and is now so thin that the Head Teacher and some scholars have broken it whilst walking and it is therefore unsafe".

Relations between parents and teachers often became strained during the early part of the century. Apparently one teacher defended himself from a poor inspector's report by questioning the caliber of the students and rightfully deserved the dressing down he received when the Director of Education who wrote to him, in part,

"... Your explanation of the --- addressed to the Inspector cannot be accepted. The responsiveness and intelligence of children does not depend upon the locality in which they reside, but upon the skilful training in self expression that they receive from day to day"

Did the teacher in question really say that Jan Juc children were not all that academically endowed?

In 1907 an inquiry was held into complaints laid against the Head Teacher. As a result of the inquiry the Secretary of the Department of Education sent the following letter to George Imer:

"With reference to the inquiry held at the above-named school into the complaints laid against the Head Teacher I have to inform you that the District Inspector has furnished the following report upon the matter viz:-

There is no regulation against a teacher's wife holding land near his school, nothing can be done in regard to this complaint.

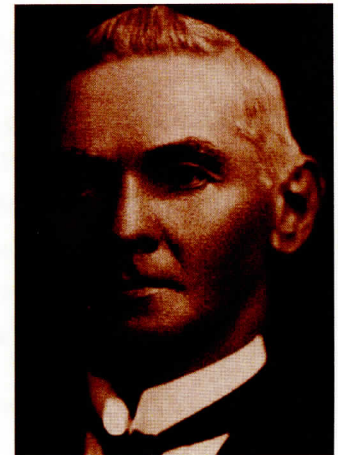
Mr. Bennett certainly does not neglect his school.

The road through the school ground has been open for public use during the last thirty years, according to the evidence of Mr Hunter one of the members of the Board of Advice; any other road would be almost impossible on account of the steep hill and deep creek.

Mr. Bennett is now remaining at school during dinner recess.

I recommend that any action be held over till I pay my examination visit towards the end of the year'.

It does not appear that any further action is called for at present. I have to thank the Board for its report on the matter and for the assistance rendered at the inquiry. An expression of the Board's views as to excising the road from the school site is requested:'



George Imer

Jubilee

*T*he jubilee of the school was celebrated on the 12th and 13th of August 1911. Part of the Geelong Advertiser report of the events is as follows:

"The Jubilee of the Jan Juc State School was celebrated on Saturday, and although a heavy shower which fell about 1 o'clock, prevented a few who had to travel a distance, from coming, there was nevertheless one of the largest and most representative gatherings ever seen in the township. Everything was at its best. The flower gardens, agricultural and vegetable plots showed the result of the careful industry of the children, under the direction of the head teacher (Mr V.H. Richards). These, the cosy shelter shed, and the well-kept dividing guard and boundary fences, each received their share of approbation from the visitors. Every one looked forward to a couple of hours of sports, but owing to the rain these had to be abandoned for the day, and an adjournment was made to the Mechanics' Institute close by, where afternoon tea, prepared by the ladies of the district, was partaken by all. To fill their cup of happiness to the brim the children, after having partaken as much of the 'good things' as they could comfortably hold, received bags of blues and fruit. This important item having been successfully negotiated, and the weather having cleared up, an adjournment was made to the school ground, where separate photographic groups of the past scholars, and present scholars with district inspector (Mr Rowe), and the head teacher (Mr. Richards), and of the only surviving founder Mr T.C. Caldwell, with the committee and speakers, were taken.

A public meeting in the school followed. The chair was taken by Cr. G. Imer Chairman of the School Committee, who welcomed all who had gathered to help in the celebrations of the jubilee of the school...

...At the first meeting of the committee in connection with the celebrations a member of the Committee, Mr. W Cunningham, had suggested commemorating the jubilee by presenting a photographic group of the founders, and the first head teacher to the school, the cost to be defrayed by the residents, and he had much pleasure, on behalf of the subscribers, in formally presenting this, hoping it would always be given a place of honor in the school...



Possible Experimental Plot. 1914

...The committee desire to specially thank Mesdames W Cunningham, G. Imer C. Bubb, G. Hooper F. Seiffert and T. Austin, and Misses D. Bright, M. Grossman, A. Davies and J. Bright, who so successfully carried out all the arrangements in connection with the refreshments, also Mr and Mrs. E. Berryman, Messrs McGinnis and G. and W. Hellings for their thoughtful action in sending prizes for the children.

Fair weather favoured the second day of the celebrations, and a large number of the residents again turned out to witness the programme of sports that had been arranged.

Girls' and boys' races, skipping contests, men's race and goal-kicking competitions were carried out. Refreshments were then partaken of' and an adjournment was afterwards made to the school building, where some school songs were rendered by the scholars, and the proceedings were closed by all singing Auld Lang Syne"

(The Mechanics' Institute was situated near the present tennis courts in Bellbrae and was removed when a new bridge was constructed later in the century. The photographic group of the founders and the first head teacher of the school is held by the Geelong Historical Records Centre.)

The Move to the Existing Site

*T*he condition of the school was now in a parlous condition and the School Committee at the time began to think of a new school building on a new site. The floors and walls of the building were now in a poor state. In June 1914 the School Committee was successful in having the then Premier of Victoria, Sir Alexander Peacock visit the school. The Geelong Advertiser reported the visit in the following manner:

'What a pretty spot' This was the exclamation of the Premier as he stepped from the car in the valley where nestles the Jan Juc School. He amplified the statement after inspecting the experimental plot when he said that Mr. R.G. Scott, the head teacher was doing work there equal to that of an Agricultural High School. This school (Jan Juc) won the A.N.A. prize for the best kept school ground. The building is over fifty years old. After hearing various suggestions from the chairman, Mr. J.E Seiffert, for improvements, and the remark 'that it was not worth repairing' Sir Alexander agreed that it would be better - and cheaper- to provide a new school of level ground. An officer would make a report on the matter. He trusted he would be Premier long enough to come and open the new school on the new site. Cr. Imer: 'We will keep you to your word!' The Premier: "I will come whether I am Premier or not." (Cheers) Before the party left Sir Alexander Peacock discovered that he was well acquainted with the father of the head teacher Mr. R.G. Scott, and had "a pleasant chat' on the subject."

But while the Premier might have rapidly agreed that a new school should be established on a new site the implementation of the decision was to take some time. George Imer as correspondent for the School Committee wrote a number of letters to the local member Mr. J. Farrer MLA asking that the Government carry out its promise. George Imer's letter of the 22nd of October 1914 gives reasons for the purchase of the existing site and shows a deft salesman's touch. The letter reads in part:

Jas. L. Farrer Esq.
MLA

Dear Sir

After the visit of Sir Alexander Peacock and yourself on last Arbor Day, negotiations were opened for securing a site for the promised new school. Only two proposed sites were approved by Mr Rowe (Inspector) and the owner of one of these refused to sell the required land.

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Mr. J. Farrar, M.L.A. addressing parents and students, 1914

The next choice was a block of about 4.5 acres, opposite the Post Office on the old Anglesea Road and near the new deviation of this road approved by the Country Roads Board. The block selected is the only level ground; on that portion of the Amos's property severed from their main block by the deviation and as the remaining severed block is all hilly, its value will be deteriorated by sale of the school block so they have asked a rather higher price than anticipated to cover the damage and I am directed by the Committee to state that they recommend the purchase at the price of 25 pounds per acre as this is the only suitable site within a couple of miles.

The reason for purchasing the whole of the block about 6x7 chains is to make a combined school ground and recreation reserve and is a chance that will probably never occur...'

The present site was purchased for 116 pounds 18 shillings and 6 pence in 1916 from the Amos family. The contract for the construction of the school was let shortly afterwards for 399 pounds and 3 shillings. The old school continued to deteriorate and despite a number of offers by local residents the Department refused to sell. Eventually the building was sold for the value of its materials in 1921 and the land to Mr Helps in 1923 for 12 pounds. The land is still in the Helps family today. Residents say that on occasions flowers can be seen where once the old school was built.



Bellbrae 1916

Teacher Transfer

*I*t was at this time that matters became quite heated between a teacher and parents and the teacher was removed by the Department. The Director explained the need for his actions in the following letter:

"In reference to the recent inquiry held by the District Inspector at the above school, I have to inform you that the evidence adduced shows justification for the complaints that your attitude towards Mr. G. Imer and your action in other matters had caused discord among parents.

In writing insulting letters to Mr. Imer you acted in a manner unworthy of one occupying the position of teacher Your action sending letters to the petitioners, on the eve of the inquiry, threatening them with prosecution, calls for severe censure.

It was further proved that the discipline of the school is unsatisfactory and that the pupils have not made good progress. This appears to be due, in some measure, to the discord aroused by your officious and injudicious actions.

It has been decided to transfer you immediately; and, I would add that the Department will have no option but to dispense with your services if you give occasion for similar complaints in future'

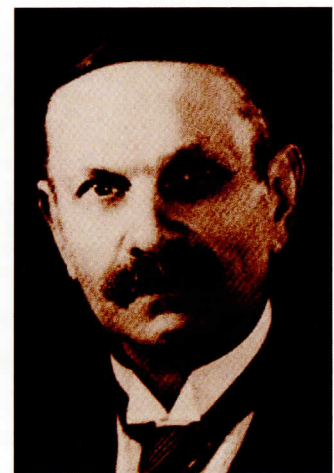
The town was pretty exciting in those days too!

The Existing Site

*T*he long overdue move to the existing site took place on the 31st October 1916. The children apparently assembled at the old school and marched up to the new site in rows of two. The school was officially opened on Tuesday afternoon, the 8th of November 1916 by the Chairman of the School Committee, Mr E Seiffert. The opening appeared to be a low-key event and Sir Alexander Peacock and Mr. J.F. Farrar MLA were unable to attend. At the opening there was a presentation to the school of a mounted enlargement of a photograph of Corporal Robert G. Scott, who was Head Teacher at the school before his enlistment in August 1915. Apparently George Scott encouraged the School Committee to persist in its efforts to obtain a new school site and building. It would appear that George Scott was injured during the war and invalided home. His injury distressed a number of pupils who had been writing letters to him. The whereabouts of the photograph of George Scott is not known.

Interestingly George Scott's name does not appear on the list of head teachers provided by the Department of Education. George Imer was to leave the area shortly afterwards. A public meeting was held in the Mechanics Institute to farewell him. He was presented with a gold watch in appreciation of his contributions to the area. Least it be thought that George Imer should be considered a candidate for the sainthood by the Bellbrae community it should be pointed out that apparently he was not popular in some quarters. Durleen Bufton in her research of the history of the Seiffert family noted this comment by Em Seiffert:

'At that time the school was by the creek and there was a lucerne hedge between the school house and the school residence. 'Froggy' Imer (George Imer) cut it and Froggy put in a charge for doing the job. As he was on the school committee he wasn't allowed to do this. Grandpa (F. Seiffert) was one of the ones who asked about it and he agreed



Ern Seiffert

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that a committee member couldn't charge and was one of the ones wanting him to get off the committee. He ended up going to Melbourne anyway. He wasn't liked because he reported old Kerger as a German sympathiser and soldiers came out and everyone stuck up for old Kerger and the soldiers did nothing.'

Almost immediately Mary E. Tetaz was appointed as Head Teacher. Miss Tetaz who was related to the Gundry family was to remain at the school for 14 years. Her period at the school was not uneventful, and this was no doubt due in part to the ill feeling held by some in the community to the Gundry family.

An example of this tension occurred in 1920. The School Committee wished to remove a large number of silver wattles from the school grounds. In the Committee's view the wattles and scrub had created a wilderness and the site presented a very neglected appearance. Pines and other trees had been planted around the boundary but the wattles had sprung up preventing the planted trees from being seen and appreciated. Mary Tetaz, William Gundry and the formidable Mrs. Annie Gundry were opposed to the removal of the wattles. Mary Tetaz argued that the school grounds were about four acres in size and that the cleared area of the school was more than one acre and that this was ample play area for the twenty three children attending the school at the time. Annie Gundry was not against the wattle trees being thinned out but was opposed to them being 'ruthlessly destroyed' as they provided splendid shade in the summer and acted as 'a great windbreak from the cold storm winds of winter' Annie Gundry also argued that the children enjoyed having the trees as 'the children have great games amongst the trees' William Gundry as Chairman of the School Committee asked the Education Department to send an Inspector to investigate the matter. The hapless District Inspector Mr. Dow seemed to like the wattle trees. His report stated:



School Group Circa 1920s. (Mary Tetaz is in the back row, right).

"These wattles are such as are found along the banks of creeks and rivers in Southern Victoria. Many of the trees are twelve feet high and are really beautiful trees. The whole plantation is a wonderful example of Nature's handiwork in repairing the ravages of man:'

In the end a compromise was reached and a number of the wattle trees around the boundary were removed. Ironically a similar situation was to occur sixty years later when the school community had to make a decision whether to remove the pine plantation to make way for the school oval. As is the way of wattle trees, the trees became infected with borers and in 1925 consideration was given by the school committee to the removal of the bark for sale. This produced a flurry of letters from the Education Department indicating that any money received from the sale of bark had to be placed in general revenue. Despite pleas by the school committee the Department was unmoved. Apparently no action was taken to add to the revenues of the state government.

A more serious matter occurred in 1920 when there was a petition prepared by some parents for the transfer of Mary Tetaz. The District Inspector Mr. Dow became involved once again. Mr. Dow believed "that those who signed the petition are not satisfied with the progress of their children." However Mr. Dow believed that perhaps other matters had also influenced the petition. Mr. Dow reported that "The Chairman of the School Committee (William Gundry) and the Correspondent (Mr. Kilpatrick) were opponents recently, as both were candidates for the Shire Council.' Apparently feeling ran high in the election as William Gundry was hooted on the evening of the election as he crossed the bridge near his home. Mr. Dow believed that "the contest would not tend to make them friendlier." He went on to report that "Miss Tetaz says those who are complaining have not interviewed her, with the exception of Mr Kilpatrick. I have arranged for Miss Tetaz to meet members of the School Committee and hear what the causes of complaint are. I have suggested that she should reply to any charge made. I have suggested to the School Committee that Miss Tetaz should be given an opportunity to state her side of the case. The meeting will clear the air"

The meeting of the School Committee was held and Miss Tetaz attended to hear the complaints. She was informed that no member of the committee would make a complaint at the meeting. Miss Tetaz was to remain at the school until 1929.

Tennis Court

*T*n 1928 Ernie Bone, on behalf of the School Committee, sought permission to build a public tennis court on the school grounds. The Department of Education gave permission for the tennis court to be erected provided that the court is used solely by the children during the school hours. It is not clear whether the court was ever actually built.

Change of Name

*O*n the 27th September 1922 the name of the area was changed from Jan Juc to Bellbrae. The reason for the change of name and the origins of the name are not clear It has been suggested that the name was changed because the local inhabitants thought that the name was German and that an association with Germany was not approved because of the First World War. Certainly there were precedents for a name change because of this reason (Freshwater Creek Church was formerly Waldkirch and Grovedale was called Germantown). The war however by that time had been for nearly four years and it would seem unlikely that the name change would have occurred at that time because of an inaccurate connection with Germany. There was apparently a feeling that the name Jan Juc was holding back development in the area either because of its aboriginal origin or because the area had a poor reputation as it had been a wine growing area in earlier times and the wine cellars may have attracted a reputation for hard drinking. Of the two possibilities it is more likely that

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Bellbrae 1931

aboriginal origin was the reason as wine growing in the area would have ceased when vines were removed because of phylloxera in the later 1880's and the industry had not recovered the vigour of those earlier times. Mr Con. Grossman, a long time resident of the area, provided the following recollection:

"The change of name Jan-Juc to Bellbrae occurred approximately 1920. The reason why was that a city man, carpenter by trade, bought a 50 acre farm found it difficult to sell. He blamed the aboriginal name of Jan Juc. Being a rather good spokesman he got the majority of residents to agree after much opposition. Several names were submitted. The name Bellbrae, submitted by Mrs Emma Bone, was chosen. The name change did not improve sales and the property was eventually bought by an adjoining neighbor"

Apparently suggested names were placed in a hat and the first name drawn out was Bellbrae. The origin of this name is also not entirely clear as although it is commonly considered that the name honours the Bell family from Addiscott, there have been suggestions that the name refers to W.M. Bell, who along with Joseph Gundry purchased the first blocks of land sold by the Government in 1857, and who was the chairman at the opening of the Jan Juc school in 1861. A petition was taken and signed by over 200 residents and presented to the Barrabool Council. The name change was apparently not popular with the Gundry family and Barrabool Council followed the tradition of letting it lie on the table for a month and then took the unusual step of referring the matter to its solicitors seeking advice as to the legality of the petition. This delay was probably induced by William Gundry who was a councilor at the time. The petition was declared legal and passed on to the Government for action.

Too Many Holidays?

*T*he early 1930's saw the arrival of a teacher who had a penchant for granting unauthorised holidays. Mr. Joseph Matters received this letter from the Department dated 29th February 1932.



School Group Photos Circa 1940s



1940s



Bellbrae 1941

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"With reference to the report on the Quarterly Return that the School Committee holiday was observed on the 15th December to enable you to buy toys for the Christmas tree. I have to inform you that the holiday will be allowed on this occasion. Any future absence for a similar purpose will be without pay."

However the Department was to take a harder line for an earlier holiday when Mr Matters received the following letter dated 11th April 1932.

"Referring to the report of the District Inspector dated 16th March, which discloses that the school was closed at 2pm on the 18th September last, I have to inform you that as a departmental sanction was not obtained for this early departure, a half day's pay will be deducted. A serious view will be taken of any further irregularity of this type."

Mr Matters apparently decided to play the bureaucracy at its own game as on the 20th February 1933 the Department sent the following letter.

"With reference to your application to be half an hour late on the 25th February, I have to inform you that permission is granted."

However the bureaucracy was to win in the end for on transfer to Warrnambool in 1934 Mr Matters received this letter from the Department.

"I have to inform you that your successor at the School 319 Bellbrae has reported the following discrepancy in the reader account, and you are requested to forward the amount of 1/7d without delay to the Accountant at this office in settlement"

Discrepancy	1 First	Surplus	1 Eight
	1 Fifth		
	1 Seventh		

Centenary

The centenary of the school was celebrated on 12th and 13th August 1961. Several hundred people took part in the 'Back to Bellbrae celebrations' The celebrations were officially opened by Mr T. Darcy MLA who unveiled a plaque commemorating the centenary. Past teachers who attended included Mr Anderson, Mr Esler, Miss M. Tetaz, Mr L. Hunt, Miss E. Jeffries, Mr O. Bawden, Mr M. McArthur, M.D. McKinnon and Mr P Sweeney . A procession was held which was headed by St. Augustine's Orphanage Band, and the Norlane marching girls. The procession included old time conveyances, horses and buggies, old motor cars and a tandem. Several people dressed in costumes of the different periods of the school's history. The oldest pupils present were Mr W Cunningham and Mrs M. Bussell. They both planted trees to mark the occasion.

Changes

Although the school was still largely undisturbed, the late 1940's and 1950's were to see some changes at the school. In 1947 Mr C. Grossman wrote to the Department requesting that a school residence be provided. It was not until 1950, however that the prefabricated building arrived on site. It was quickly assembled and in about three weeks the Head Teacher Mr Orm Bawden, took occupancy on the 10th September 1950. The school was not connected to electricity at the time and Mr. Bawden had to request a kerosene hot water service. Electricity was eventually connected to the school in 1953 for the cost of 29 pounds 15 shillings. Mr E. Bufton agreed to the connection on behalf of the school committee as the school committee was required to meet part of the cost of the connection. A septic system was installed in 1963. Prior to this date the head teacher had to dig pits. Mr Bawden remembers Bellbrae for its hard ground. Mr D. McKinnon remembers that he dug the holes on Sunday mornings and placed a lily in each filled hole. He was amused to see, when visiting the area several years after he had left as head teacher the lillies still flourishing. In 1977 the netball



A Happy Bellbrae Group 1952 (Orm Bowden is shown centre).



Barrabool School Sports



A Winning Sports Team (Phil Bowtell appears top right).

area was completed at no cost to the School by the generous assistance of the International Harvester Company Supervision was provided by Noel Batson.

New Settlers

Up to the 1970's the Bellbrae community was largely undisturbed. The school was basically as it had always been since its inception, a one teacher school serving the families of the area which, with a few major exceptions such as the Gundry's, had remained in the area for generations. But the 1970's was to see a major change to the Bellbrae region as a new 'middle class' seeking an 'improved quality of life' moved onto small land holdings in the area. The numbers attending the school increased and for the first time in its history the Bellbrae School gained a second teacher and classroom in 1974.

Pine Plantation

On the suggestion of the District Inspector permission was obtained in 1940 from the Education Department to form a school plantation. In all 810 young pines, obtained from the state government's nursery at Yackandandah were planted on August 30th, 1940. The trees were planted 8 feet apart. A number of the original trees died and were replaced a year later by self sown trees found in the school ground. These trees in time were to become a very distinct feature of the Bellbrae Primary School remembered with affection by both teachers and pupils. The trees provided an ideal play area for the children and they happily built their 'cubbies' among them. Forty years later, in 1980, the trees had seen better days and the school committee of the day wanted to sell them and use the proceeds to build an oval and a dam. The issue divided the school community. The head teacher of the time, Mr Phil Bowtell, like Mary Tetaz before him, wanted to see the trees retained. In the end the trees were removed and were sold for \$1883.18 to Victree and the proceeds were used to help build the present oval and dam.

Recent Changes

The 1980's saw a marked change in the school. There was a rapid increase in the numbers of children attending the school. These were mainly the children of the new people entering the area. In 1980 the number of children attending the school outside the area was such that the Department agreed to the establishment of a bus route. The first bus driver of the route was Joe Robottom from Anglesea. In 1981 Bill Larcombe constructed the oval and the dam and the School Committee grassed the oval. In 1982 the School Committee decided that there should be a shelter shed. Michael Carr completed the design and a parent, Larry Richards, supervised the building. The unusual positioning of the building on the site came about because of a disagreement on the committee as to whether a wall of the shelter shed should be used as a return wall for games. In the end one wall was supposed to be used as a return wall for ball games. The building has never fully met its function as a shelter shed and in 1985 it was enclosed by the school committee and is now used as an Art Room. In 1985 a link room joining two portable classrooms was constructed using School Committee and Education Department funds.

Conclusion

Although the number of children attending the school has increased from when it was first established and the number and type of buildings have changed, in many ways much has remained the same over the years. Sixty-four children attend the school. The central building dates back to 1916. The school is still primarily a small rural school and a central part of the community. Parents, by and large, are vitally concerned about the operation of the school. The school committee, like its counterparts over the years still battles with the Department of Education to obtain the extra resources it feels is necessary. Hundreds of children over the years have had their early education at Bellbrae School. Rural schools have fulfilled a basic role since the beginnings of education in Australia. While they may suffer in comparison in some ways in the range of educational opportunities offered in larger primary schools they nevertheless have a special place in the hearts of many Australians. May they long be a part of the Australian education scene.



Bellbrae Primary School 125 years Celebration Cake, 1986

Bellbrae Primary School 1861 - 2011



ANNIVERSARY

*It is with great appreciation and a huge thank you
to all who have contributed
to the updated version of this book.*

*We hope that you enjoy our memories of this period of time
which may differ from other people's memories.*

*Like the previous writers, we would have liked
to have had more time for writing Bellbrae Primary School's
vast and interesting history.*

Graham Bayles

Deborah Shanhun

Yvonne Sumner

Vision Statement

*B*ellbrae Primary School offers students, staff and families a strong sense of community and belonging, enabling our students to develop and grow in a unique environment that is enjoyable, supportive, relevant and able to offer challenges that empower students to be life-long learners.

In 2008, after consultation and feedback from the school community, parents, teachers and the school council, this vision statement was written and agreed upon.



Bellbrae Primary School 1999



SEA Swimming Sports at Lorne 2001



Mayfair 2009



Inter School Sports Day 1991



The Mock Italian Wedding (Part of the LOTE Studies Program) 2001



Bellbrae Primary School 2010



Bellbrae Primary School Office

*U*p until 1985 Head Teachers of Bellbrae Primary School not only taught the students but also did all the administration, newsletters plus looked after sick children. The school had no computers or photocopiers, there was only a golf-ball typewriter and a stencilling machine. All Financial Ledgers and cheques were hand written.

In 1985 the Principal was Mr Neal Turnbull, at the time there were 70 students

In the same year, the first Secretary/Office Manager to be appointed to Bellbrae Primary School was Mrs. Yvonne Sumner in 1985 and stayed until her retirement in 2005 but has remained closely associated with the school. Mrs. Sumner's successor was Mrs. Judy Smith in 2005 along with Mrs. Belinda Bassi both of whom are still in the Office.

Since 1916 the old historic classroom was also the school office with the telephone in the porch on the wall. At recess and lunchtime it also became a staffroom and sick bay.

In 1995 the School Office was moved to the renovated School Residence with the Principal Mr. Graham Bayles in the front bedroom and the Office Manager (Mrs. Sumner) in the lounge. They were kept company by a family of noisy possums in the chimney and a blue tongue lizard under the house.

In 2002 the Administration/Office was moved to the new building where it remains today which was part of the Stage 1 upgrade.

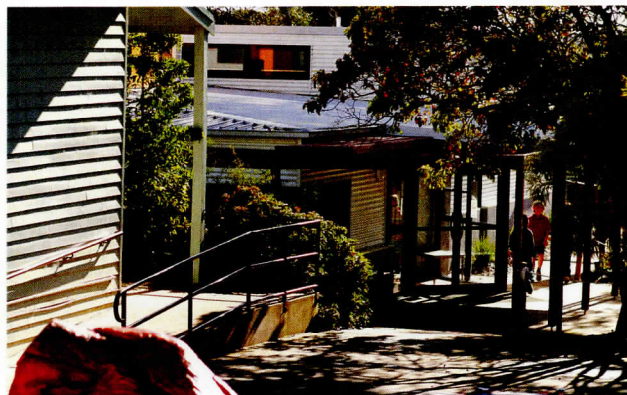
The Three Buildings that were used as the Bellbrae Primary School Office



1916 to 1995



1995 to 2002



2002 to 2011

Changes Within The Office

By 1995 Bellbrae Primary School entered into 'School of the Future' program. Below is a description from 'Victoria's Schools of the Future' written by Tony Townsend 1995.

'When the new government of the Australian state of Victoria was elected in 1992, it began the most radical change to an education system in the history of the country, introducing the Schools of the Future initiative. The underlying rationale, which has its roots in 20 years of experience in Victoria, is that quality outcomes of schooling can only be assured when decision making takes place at the local level.

The Schools of the Future program has been implemented in stages, with schools formulating a key feature of the program, a charter at different times.'

Through the school charter, school communities have the opportunity to determine the future character and goals of the school. School councils determine the educational policies of the school within the framework of the school charter, which is approved by the state Board of Studies'

Another change came with the introduction of CASES Software in 1995 which involved administration and finance, which ultimately saw the end of the handwritten Pupil Registers.

The original handwritten Pupil Registers are now kept at the Geelong Heritage Centre, 51 Little Malop Street, Geelong 3220. Archive Nos. GRS 382

Originally receipts to parents were written manually until a Cash Register and Receipting Printer was installed in 1998 as well as a new computer workstation and file server.

In 2000 GST was introduced into schools.

'In later years the software was upgraded to CASES 21 Administration and CASES 21 Finance in 2003,(an Accrual Accounting System). CASES21 is the software component of CASES (Computerised Administrative System Environment in schools) which is the package to Victorian Government schools to support school administration, finance and central reporting.' Cases 21 Internet.

By the same year we were also operating The 'Manual Swipe Card'.

The Bellbrae School Residence

Sections of a letter to Bellbrae Primary School Council from the Office Manager, Yvonne Sumner in her attempt to keep the building.

'The School Residence was brought to the school in two parts during 1950. It was a weather board building that came from Phelan Homes in Marysborough and was part of the Victorian Education History as well as Bellbrae's.

'The Residence was an integral part of the Bellbrae Primary School and its valuable history. In those days when there was no T.V. at the school, programs such 'Behind the News' were viewed on the T.V. in the lounge room of the residence; this was a daily occurrence as were the reading classes that were held there.'

The first occupant of the School Residence was Head Teacher Mr Orm Bawden, who moved in on the 10th September 1950. The last Principal and his family to live in the residence was Mr. Peter Kirby in 1981, however they only lived in it for a short time. Mr. Kirby is now Principal of Inverleigh P.S. Afterwards the DEECD rented it to a teacher from a Geelong School. During the 1980's the residence was rented to a local policeman, his wife and family.



Bellbrae Primary School Residence 1965



The School Residence preparing to make its final journey - 2nd April 2002



In 1994 the school received a Grant for an Administration Block. In 1995 the Grant was used for the School Residence to be renovated and converted for administration.

In 1998 the school residence was handed back to the school from the Education Department.

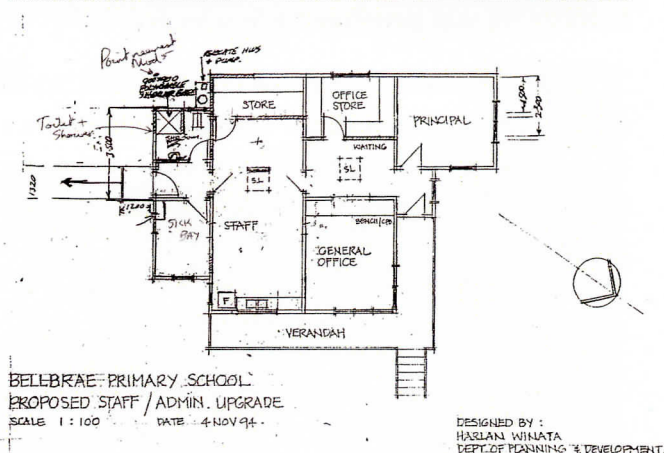
However, when the new building (Stage 1) was to be built in 2001 it was found that the School Residence was in the way and was sold for \$1000 .

The Residence was therefore moved on 2nd April 2002, and became a holiday home. The playground next to the bottom carpark was where the Residence once stood.

There are very few left of that era when the Headmaster and his family lived alongside the school.

The Iron Bark Tree

Bellbrae Primary School Residence before being loaded onto trucks. The 'saved' Iron Bark tree in foreground. - 2nd April 2002



Snippets of History

Shelter Shed

The Shelter Shed that was built in 1982 had only two walls. In 1985 two other walls were built. The Shelter Shed then became the Art Room and later on the After School Care Room.

In April 2001 the Shelter Shed was knocked down to make way for the new buildings.



The Bellbrae Primary School (Unique) Bell

The School Hand Bell, which sits at the front Office was used to call students to class, recess and lunch times in the early days before there was a P.A. System. The Bell is from a part of a milking machine with a bolt attached inside; very historic!!

Bellbrae Primary School Uniform

In 1990 a uniform policy was formed, but it was decided that the uniform would not be compulsory. A green windcheater with the Bellbrae 'Tree' logo had been used previously for any interested families, so this colour and logo was retained, with red also being introduced as a uniform colour. The new uniform consisted of any combination of red or green clothing, with a choice of track pants, shorts, polo shirts, windcheaters and cardigans. There was also a green check cotton dress for the girls in the summer and a tartan kilt for use in the winter. Even though the new uniform wasn't compulsory, most of the students had some pieces of the clothing that they wore to school on a very regular basis. This gave the school the option of requesting that school uniform was worn to any excursion or trip outside of the school, or for formal occasions, such as the yearly school photos, etc.

Over the years the colours of the uniform have remained the same and the logo has had slight alterations, but the choice of garment has been simplified to help with cost and ordering purposes. In 2001 the School Council decided to make the wearing of the uniform compulsory and it remains that way still today.

Bellbrae School Discos

In 1996 the Junior School Council came up with the suggestion of a Disco for the Grade 4, 5 and 6 children in a classroom during a lunch time break. This was run with great enthusiasm and success and the children were eager for more. At the end of the year it was decided that we would run a disco for the children at Bellbrae Hall, complete with loud music, flashing light's, Dad's as 'bouncers' and a small refreshments area in the kitchen. Lots of singing, dancing and fun was had on the night and it was declared a resounding success. Plans were put in place to continue this on the next year, with two disco's organised for the next year and invitations sent out to the Grade 5 and 6 children at St Therese and Torquay Primary School to come along and join in the fun. The disco went from strength to strength over the next few years, moving from two events per year to four times per year on the second last Friday of term. The disco is now open to all students in the area between grades five and six; the tickets are eagerly sought after. The Bellbrae Hall has a capacity of 270 people and these tickets sell out in next to no time, with lots of children always being disappointed on missing out on the event. The Bellbrae Disco continues to be a very important fundraising event for the Bellbrae School Community.

Italian Days

The Italian Program at Bellbrae have held many exciting and memorable Italian Days which involved the whole school in a host of activities incorporating the Italian culture.

One such occasion, many years ago, involved not only the students but the parents, teachers and staff. An Italian Wedding was organised by the then Italian teacher, Antoinette Gregory. The wedding was held on a Saturday with the reception taking place at the Surf Coast Hall. The bridal party was made up of students, the guests (parents and friends), 'dressed up' for the occasion, feasted on Italian food and dancing. It was a very memorable evening.

Solar Panels

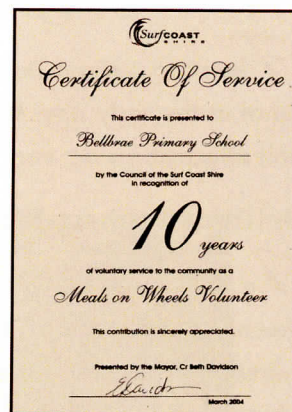
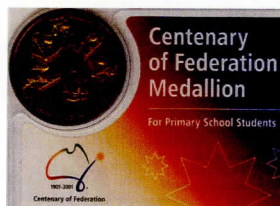
The first Solar Panels were installed in 2007/2008 with the second instalment in 2009. The panels were installed by iSolar in order to help reduce the school's costs and carbon footprint. The panels are linked to a website so the students can use the data as a learning tool.

Meals on Wheels.

Students in Grades 5 and 6, once a month, deliver meals to homes in Torquay which the recipients thoroughly enjoy the visit from the children.

Centenary of Federation 2001

In 2001, Australia celebrated its Centenary of Federation. One hundred years ago, six separate colonies came together to become one nation – the Commonwealth of Australia. To mark the occasion, students received commemorative medallions. Bellbrae Primary School also received a Certificate of Commemoration.



High Tide Festival, Torquay.

Bellbrae Primary School as well as other local schools, each year are an integral part of the High Tide Festival which is held towards the end of Term 4 in Torquay. The High Tide Festival is a cultural and arts event, and it involves the whole community.

School Concerts.

These were and still are, wonderful, exciting and memorable events for both students and parents. Each class puts on a performance of one or two songs, with the children in costumes, singing and dancing together. The Staff Act always, without fail, creates a lot of laughs, especially from the children, which are embarrassing yet are hilarious and a lot of fun.

School Chaplaincy Program

The School Chaplaincy Program was an initiative of the Government. A successful application was made in 2007. The funding for the program provides Pastoral Care support for students, parents and teachers at Bellbrae Primary School.

Enrolments

Due to the large growth in population in the Torquay/Jan Juc area there have been increased enrolments at a rapid rate at Bellbrae Primary School, Torquay College and St. Therese P.S. Consequently in 2009, the schools have requested and had approved through their school councils, the implementation of an enrolment policy based on each school's enrolment neighbourhood. The Enrolment Neighbourhood for Bellbrae Primary School is contained within Ghazepore Road, Blackgate Road, Louttit Bay Road, Forest Road, Great Ocean Road, Point Addis Road and the shared area of Jan Juc.

This was an important change to preserve the school's uniqueness.

Tournament of the Minds

Tournament of Minds is an opportunity for students with a passion for learning and problem solving to demonstrate their skills and talents in an exciting, vibrant and public way. Bellbrae students have had a high success rate during these tournaments which continues today.

One such success was in 2005 a group of students won the Literature Challenge for the region. This qualified them to participate in the State Final. They were yet again successful in the Language Literature section making them State Champions which gave them the opportunity to represent Victoria in the Australian Tournament. The team received honours in their division. The team consisted of Mitchell Blincoe, Sara Dingle, Sam Cooper, Jordan Graham, Hannah Barnes, Mikkayla Baeck and Grace Fredericks

Bellbrae Primary School Parent Association

The Parent Association provides great support to the school through a variety of fundraising activities and social events. Throughout the years the work done by the Parents & Friends has been outstanding.

Water

Bellbrae Primary School is not connected to town water and is therefore required to manage its own water supply. Water was always a problem, with the school, in the earlier days of having to constantly buy water to fill its tanks. The pipes that kept blocking, the water pump that would refuse to work, the Principal, not only had to run the school, he also had to be up to date with the rudiments of plumbing!

The school is strongly committed to the environment. Now, by using recycled water for irrigation and servicing the toilets plus the use of rain water held in larger storage tanks for drinking, the school is now better equipped to cope.

Sustainable Waste Program (2010 Case Study, created by Bellbrae Primary School 23rd February 2011).

With a whole school approach to recycling at school and at home, Bellbrae Primary School (led by our Student Action Team) implemented a waste program. Its aim was to reduce landfill, identify and separate recyclable waste, as well as educating students and the wider community of the importance of recycling. It is important that all those associated with Bellbrae Primary School have an awareness of the difference they can make in the classrooms and the school yard.'

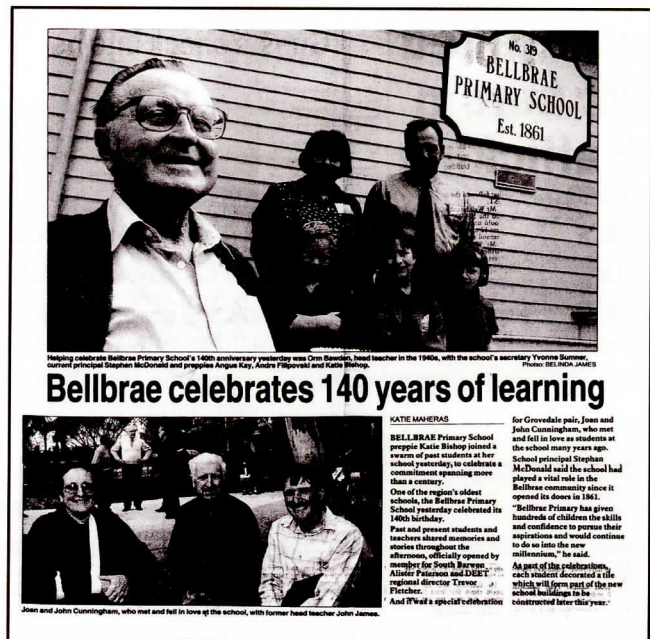
'Over the year the Bellbrae Waste Program has a decrease in landfill waste, regularly reviewed data to indicate progress, installed four separate bins in each classroom, all food scrapes to compost bins, then to edible garden, created an awareness of what we use and our responsibility of how we dispose waste.'

140th Anniversary

In 2001, the school celebrated its 140th anniversary to acknowledge the long and important connection with the local community with many activities, a huge cake, memorabilia photos and speeches.

Highlights

- A mention must be made of Jimmy Bubb, a former student at Bellbrae Primary School during the late 1920's. Jimmy Bubb lived in the house that he was born in, in Bellbrae, he never married and is now buried in the Bellbrae Cemetery. Jimmy Bubb is remembered at the school for his generosity. Jimmy used to sell bags of manure and when he reached a certain amount, approximately \$100, he would walk up to the school and donated it; he did this for many, many years. This money was used to buy books for the school Library.
- On 13th October 1994, the Governor of Victoria, Mr. Richard McGarvie visited Bellbrae Primary School, where he had morning tea, *'as part of a program familiarising himself with the State's new municipalities.'*
- Another article in relation to the above, was that of a six year old student *'who demanded a full briefing before he met the Governor, Mr. Richard McGarvie at Bellbrae Primary School.'* It was explained by his Mum that *'His Excellence was a very important official who should be shown respect.'* The student's *'previous brushes with officialdom had been somewhat restricted. "Is he the man who checked my head for nits?" he inquired.'* This article was in the Geelong Advertiser the following day after the Governor's visit.
- The water in the dam was emptied and filled in, in 1995, as there was a concern for student safety (this precious water poured down School Road, a sight to behold). In 1999 the top car park was completed where the dam once existed.
- A shipping container was bought for \$1000.00 in 1997 for storage purposes.
- The gate and archway at the front of the school was installed in 1999.
- The 'Covered Walkway' was designed by Tony Hobba and was built in 1994. It connected the class rooms, the toilets and the school residence (the Office). Most of it was pulled down to make way for new buildings. Part of the Covered Walkway still remains..
- During the Stage 1 building process, in 2001/2002, the builders were going to chop down an Iron Bark tree native to the area, which was in the way of their machinery. Consequently, Mrs Sumner tied a blanket around the tree and said 'no!' The tree, an Iron Bark, still stands today beside the footpath next to the classroom at the front of the school.
- The relocation of the fire fighting tanks from in front of the school to the top car park was done in 2002.



Buildings and Changes since 1985/1986

*I*n 1985 two portable classrooms were linked together by a 'link ROOM' which became the school's first Library. A ramp was built to link the two classrooms and Library together.

Renovations to the historic classroom in 1989 saw the removal of the blackboard plus the platform. The porch and storeroom were turned into a staff toilet and a disabled toilet. A new entrance to the building was made using the window which overlooked the original doorway.

As stated from the Project Review and Evaluation Panel 23rd June 1998. The long term enrolment for planning purposes was for 113-140' students. 'Bellbrae Primary School was once a one room school until the 1970's. Since then the area has grown. Relocatables have been provided as the enrolment has increased.

With the exception of the original school building, the rest of the classrooms remained in relocatables until 2002. Up until 2005 the student toilets were in relocatables.

Masterplan

*I*n 1997 Bellbrae Primary School was in the process of establishing a self funded Multi Purpose Room, and, as part of that process, the School Council initiated a Masterplan to ensure any future planning and development of the school was carried out in a coordinated and systematic way.

Architect Richard Lowe from SKM Design was appointed and the process began. As part of developing the Masterplan, one of the challenges was to take into account the long history of the school plus the unique setting in a rural atmosphere as well as a strong focus on incorporating environmental issues.'

In 1998 the Project Review and Evaluation Panel stated that 'the old school building is dictating the design of the Masterplan. The school is committed to retaining the building because of its historic links. Eventually the Department of Education agreed with the School Council and the old school building and established trees were kept as part of the plan.

The Masterplan was approved in August 1998. This meant that because Bellbrae Primary School consisted of portable buildings it would now be getting a whole new school.

In 1999 Alistair Paterson MLA member for South Barwon, announced proposed funding of \$720,000. Priority and funding was announced by the government of \$770,000. The final amount of the project was \$832,000 (\$500,000 Federal money, \$332,000 State money). At this time Mr. Stephen McDonald was appointed as the new Principal of the school, and over the next 12 years a big part of his role was overseeing the ongoing building programs and development of the grounds to accommodate the ever increasing growth in enrolments.

In April 2002 staff and students moved into the first part of the new building. Stage 1 consisted of - Principal Office, Main Office, Sick Bay, Foyer, Disabled toilet and shower, Staffroom, staff toilets and two classrooms.

School funds early

by Rebecca Olsen

HISTORIC Bellbrae Primary School will undergo a revamp after the State Government announced \$770,000 in "high priority" funding.

The announcement came early for delighted principal Stephen McDonald, who did not expect funding until the end of the 2000/2001 financial year.

Mr McDonald said the project would include four new permanent classrooms, a student toilet block and a staff and administration centre under stage one of the master plan.

Stage two is expected to include another classroom plus a new library and technology centre.

"We will be basically getting a new school," Mr McDonald said.

The Bracks Government fast tracked funds for a new Bellbrae Primary School after plans were initiated by the former Kennett Government.

Liberal Member for South Barwon Alister Paterson announced proposed funding of \$720,000 in September, 1999.

He continued his push for funds this year despite being in Opposition.

Mr McDonald said the school, which celebrates its 140th birthday next year, has incorporated its historic main building into the new plans.

"The plans blend the old with the new," he said.

"This is an exciting time for the Bellbrae community as this guarantees the school's future for another hundred years or more.

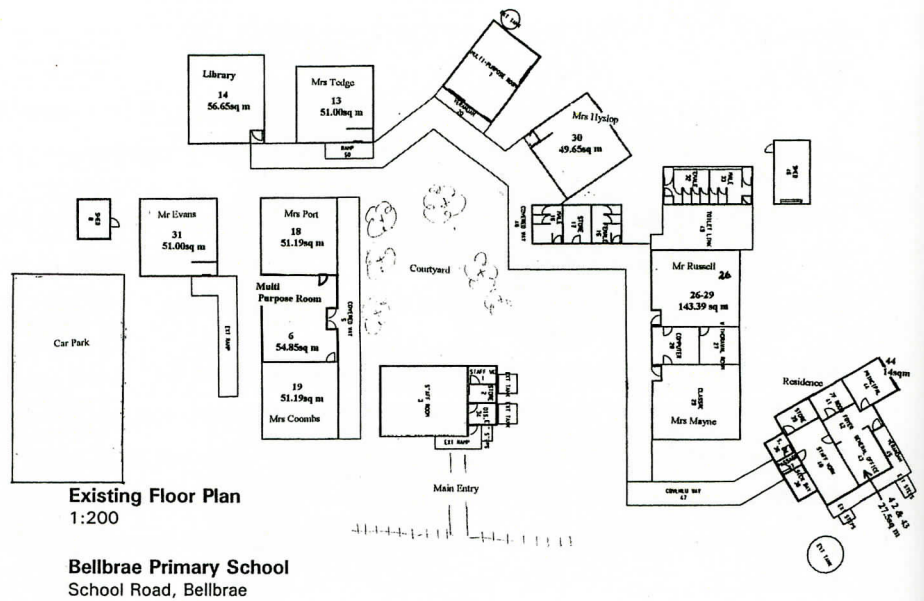
"It allows it to continue as a cornerstone to a very supportive and friendly community."

The building tender is expected to be in by the end of the year with hopes for work to be finalised this time next year.



The building was officially opened by Alistair Paterson, MLA member for South Barwon and Elaine Carbines, Member for Geelong Province, on 14th June 2002. Mr. Stewart McArthur MHR, Federal Member for Corangamite who was to officially open the building, was unable to attend on the day.

The highlight of the celebrations was a song sung by the Prep, One and Two students. The children sang 'Jeff the Builder' to the tune of 'Bob the Builder'. The song was reworded by Mrs L. Brand for Jeff Redman who managed the work site.



Existing Floor Plan
1:200

Bellbrae Primary School
School Road, Bellbrae

1998

With Mr McDonald as Principal, together with people like David Mitchell, Alasdair McLeod, Nick Harvey, John Penney, Don Lawrie, Eugene Athan, John Bryce (to name a few) on the School Council during this time, there were many others who were instrumental in doing what was best for the school. Their support made implementing the changes an exciting time for Bellbrae Primary School.

In July 2005 staff and children moved into Stage 2 of the building which consisted of three General Purpose Classrooms, Library, Service Store and at long last, the overdue Student Toilets.

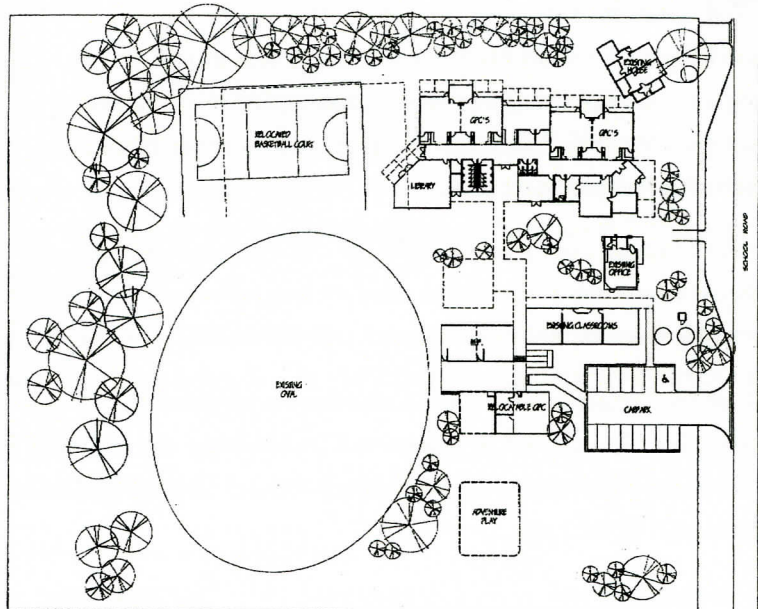
The Stage 2 building was officially opened on 22 November 2005 by Jacinta Allan MP, Minister for Education Services.

New Building – 2011

The building was funded through the BER (Building Education Revolution) that was partly a response to stimulate the economy during the global financial crisis. The actual design is from a set template that was offered to a number of schools similar in size to Bellbrae.

The building permits and plans were finalised in April 2010 with work commencing immediately. Access to the building was finally given, after numerous delays, on 15th June 2011

The building consists of four classrooms, an open plan learning area that could fit about 450 people in, two office spaces, a full commercial kitchen, a kitchenette, a learning hub, toilets and decking.



SITE PLAN
BELLBRAE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 2000 1:900

2000



Out of School Hours Care, the beginning

Statement below was taken from the After School Program Capital Upgrading Submission 1998.

'The Bellbrae After School Program was established at the beginning of Term 2 in 1994. The program was funded as a 30 place program. The first term of operation in 1994, (Mr Mitchell Bush as Coordinator) had an average of 11 children per night. The program is overseen by a Management Committee which has the responsibility for policy and procedure development and implementation, employment of staff, fee setting, equipment purchases, budget preparation and meeting the reporting requirements according to their Service Agreement.'

'The program is located in the art room at the school which is a converted shelter shed.. The room is a limiting factor to the future expansion and development of the program. The present facility used by ASC program does not meet the National Standards in terms of available space for children.'

The application for Capital Works Upgrade was seen as integral to the continued financial viability of the program.

A Multi-purpose Room subcommittee was formed with representatives from School Council, Environment Committee, Staff, After School Care Committee. This subcommittee nominated a Project Manager to oversee all aspects of the project. Members of the Management Committee were, Vicki Chrzanowski (Manager), Jan Brown, Helen Johnson, Debbie Tedge and Mary Taylor.

In Term 4, 1997 the ASC program had an average attendance of 13 children per night with 17 children per night by 1998. Before School Care began in January 2005.

Vicki Chrzanowski's Dream in 1999

I dreamt that our school had a large indoor area where we could have our assembly if it was raining, or where we could have concert practices as well as a larger space for After School Care. Because the size of our school, we would not be entitled to a multi-purpose room for the Department until we had an enrolment of 200.

It all began over twelve months ago, the Government changed the funding to After School Care programs and we were invited to apply for a \$7000 capital works grant. All that we could afford was the purchase of two second-hand Mod 2 buildings from the Dept of Infrastructure's store in Port Melbourne. Our submission was successful.'

The Portables – History of the After School/Multi-Purpose Room

Letter from Commonwealth of Australia, Health and Family Services, 10th June 1999.

'The Minister for Family Services has approved a grant for capital upgrading of \$7,000 to Bellbrae Primary School Council to purchase, install and connect to utilities, two second-hand demountables for the Bellbrae Primary School After School Program at 50 School Road, Bellbrae.'

The final costs for the Multi-Purpose / ASC Room was \$5,280 to purchase and transport two portable classrooms to Bellbrae P.S. plus \$3,430 for building works to remove timber walls and create on large room.

The building is owned by the Bellbrae Primary School Council and upon its arrival required a building permit from the Surf Coast Shire. All other buildings at Bellbrae Primary School are owned by the Department of Education and do not require building permits from the local shire.

The Official Opening of the Multi Purpose / After School Care Room was held on Monday, 20th March 2000.

OSHC Today

Bellbrae Primary School has always strived to meet and cater for the challenges of a changing community. One such need, that of providing quality Out of School Care has been successfully handled since 1994. As Bellbrae Primary School grew, and parental demographics changed from having a stay at home care giver, to both parents participating in the work force, the school recognized the importance of assisting parents by offering After School Care.

The first After School care program was held in the converted shelter shed.

In 1999, after a great deal of research and effort by Mrs Vicki Chrzanowski and a team of dedicated parents, the school purchased an old portable classroom, which they had delivered and installed on the school site to become the new home of the After School Care Program. Numerous working bees were held to paint, carpet and install plumbing in the building to provide a more comfortable, workable home for the children.

The year 2004 saw Bellbrae Primary School, with enrolments of 141, survey the school community to determine the need to also offer a Before School Care Service to help alleviate the stress from working parents in the mornings. The Before School Care program was introduced in 2005 providing breakfast and a warm safe environment where the children can start the day.

In 2011 OSHC caters for a large and increasing number of students in Before and After School Care, and is a highly valued school program.

Expertly coordinated by Tracy DeLandre, children find themselves enjoying and participating in a wide range of activities from arts & crafts to cooking and sports.

After School Care recognizing the importance of providing a stimulating and creative environment, and also participates in the Active After Schools Communities Program is funded by the Australian Sports Commission which allows them to bring into the program for outside, specialized programs. Through this the children have had the opportunity to participate in various activities including Multi Sports, Ball Games, Karate, Gymnastics and even how to become Circus Performers!

After School Care's first home, the old shelter shed, might be long gone, but the ideology of fostering a safe, creative environment, a home away from home still stands true to this day.

School Clock

This old clock, which hangs in the original classroom at Bellbrae Primary School, was discovered to be not working by Bob O'Neil (past member of School Council) who took it to a clock enthusiast in Torquay to have it restored.



Crisis During School Closures in 1993

During 1993 the future of Bellbrae Primary School looked uncertain. During this time the State Government was 'earmarking' schools for closure. As quoted in The Echo February 1995, Local News.

'Bellbrae was put under the microscope by the State Opposition Party which published a list of likely candidates for closure which included Bellbrae Primary School. While the State Government refused to confirm or deny the accuracy of the 'hit list', confusion among prospective parents and students at the time was considerable and it led to a significant lobbying on the part

History of Bellbrae Primary School

of the Bellbrae school community'. 'Principal Mr. Graham Bayles said with the doubt about the school's future, new enrolments dropped for the beginning of the 1994 school year to 6 but were back at an anticipated 30 plus in 1995. We're stronger than ever now, and the school has some decisions to make about how big we want to become.'

The Herald Sun also had an article on the front page with Bellbrae the first school listed as a possible. This was followed up by Mr Bayles with phone calls to the Shadow Minister for Education at the time and with the source of the statement.

The staff and parents were, with reason on tenterhooks until the actual list was printed as neither of the above nor the paper were prepared to retract the damaging article.

The Bellbrae Primary School Mayfair

*P*rior to the "Mayfair" Bellbrae ran a fête just before Mothers' Day for children to bring and to buy presents for their mums. This developed into a popular annual occasion which was instrumental in selling the school community to possible families.

The special Mayfair Days have become a tradition since 1999. The inaugural May Day was held on Saturday, 1st May 1999. Libby Mitchell, Alisdair Macleod, Karen Lowe (fair organisers) and members of the Bellbrae Parents' Association initially embraced this theme with a maypole in the centre of the oval complete with flowing coloured ribbons and flowers. Many children enjoyed the opportunity to dance in the traditional style around the maypole to loud music whilst holding onto the ribbons. It was a wonderful sight and the day was enhanced by many school members dressed in period costume which added a very special touch. This inaugural Mayday was a huge success.

Since then the Mayfair is held in May every year which is now coordinated by Belinda Bassi with expert help from Judy Smith, staff and parents of the school. Each year there is always a different theme, which adds to the uniqueness of this country community fair. The highlights of these Mayfair's are diverse. To name but a few highlights. The varied and delicious food, the stalls of fresh country produce, the vast varieties of plants, the creative crafts, the never ending live entertainment, the wonderful spinning wheel prizes, the enormous "valued packed" raffles, a mobile animal nursery, sheep shearing demonstrations, and the not-to-be-missed, "Horse Poo Lotto" and much much more!

The Mayfair is the main fundraiser for the school and it is a memorable day for students, parents, friends, families and community members. It serves as a reminder that community spirit and good old -fashioned entertainment will remain as important as ever at Bellbrae Primary School.

Enrolments

*I*n the mid 2000's student enrolments steadily increased. By 2011 more than 300 students were attending the school. The majority of children had to travel by car or bus to the school. Such was its popularity. The increased numbers meant that there were more classrooms (15 in 2011) and more staff than at any time in the past. It also allowed for specialist teachers in Art, Music, Physical Education, Computers and Italian, thus providing an even broader curriculum for all students.

Conclusion

*T*he Bellbrae Primary School has a fantastic reputation which is due to the strong community feel and the magnificent country atmosphere. It is the parents and students that go towards making the Bellbrae School so special. The school continues to cater for 2011 and beyond.

Enrolments 1980 - 2011

YEAR	Male	Female	Total
1980	28	18	46
1981	32	20	52
1982	29	22	51
1983	31	33	64
1984	34	35	69
1985	31	39	70
1986	28	36	64
1987	30	38	68
1988	29	41	70
1989	32	38	70
1990	29	42	71
1991	30	51	81
1992	45.1	61.2	106.3
1993	58.1	76.2	134.3
1994	65.1	76.2	141.3
1995	77	82.1	159.1
1996	79	82	161
1997	90.2	73	163.2
1998	91.4	65	156.4
1999	86.7	68	154.7
2000	86	73	159
2001	92	77	169
2002	92	74	166
2003	94	75	169
2004	95.4	68	163.4
2005	99	73	172
2006	98	82	180
2007	113	86	199
2008	134	88	222
2009	138	116	254
2010	154	127	281
2011	176	149	325

List of Head Teachers/Principals

The following list of permanent head teachers was provided by the Department of Education.

NAME	YEAR
William Cook	1861-78
Jane M. 'Coolshan	1878-79
Elizabeth H. Martyn	1880-82
Mary A. Mansfield	1883-88
No record available	
James T. Anderson	1900-03
Robert J. Bennett	1904-13
Allen E. Esther	1914-16
Mary E. Tetaz	1916-29
Seddon M. Kerr	1929-31
Joseph G. Matters	1932-34
Leonard M. Hunt	1934-44
Eileen M. Jeffrey	1944-45
Lorna E. Parle	1946-47
Morris O Bawden	1948-53
Vaughn T. Hilton	1954-55
M.J. McArthur	1956-57
D.B. MacKinnon	1958
P.J. Sweeney	1959-63
Edward T. Lynes	1964-65
T.T. James	1965-67
L.A. Torpey	1968
Trevor K. Duke	1969
Roger N. Gumley	1972-74
Christine Jones	1975
Phil J. Bowtell	1976-80
Peter Kirby	1981-82
Neal J. Turnbull	1983-85
Graham Bayles	1987-97
Nigel Waring	1997-99
Stephen McDonald	1999-

Some of the teachers who were Head Teachers/Principals (acting) included:

J. James	1897
V.H. Richards	1911
G. Scott	1915
Peter Heywood	1986
Michael West	1999
Adrian Waters	2011

