

A Brief History of State School No. 114 Camperdown

The first school was a slab hut in Turkey Lane at Old Timboon. Mr Crosbie was the first Head Teacher and in 1853 was succeeded by Mr Henderson who resigned in 1858 and died in 1861.

The Inspector, Mr Thomas Walker, who visited Camperdown in 1855, stressed the want of a boarding school.

There were two factions, one lead by Mr Ware, advocating a Vested School for boarders, and one by Dr Curdie, asking for a Non Vested School without boarders. On May 28th, 1855, a grant of 720 pounds was received and a further promise of 185 pounds for three years was given; also a block of land situated south of the Aboriginal Reserve. This was applied for and granted on September 15th, 1855 – the land bordering Henderson street, measuring 900 feet by 1,500.

A plan of the school was drawn up – a two storeyed building to accommodate boarders was described and a further grant of 300 pounds was then made.

From the beginning of 1856, the new school was in the course of construction on the present site. These are the names of the children who attended the Old Timboon School in 1857 and attended the new Camperdown School upon its opening in 1858:

- Anne Cuzens
- Christina McNicol
- Mary Ann Henry
- Maggie Gellie
- Sarah Grayland
- Anne Grayland
- Mary Walls
- Mary Ann Spalls
- Tini Gibson
- Margaret Brock
- Bella Fenton
- Jimmie Moodie
- XXX Cuzens
- Willie Bolton
- Tom and Charlie Grayland
- Prince – an Aborigine.

The new school was built of stone and probably the blue-stone portion of the later Camperdown State School was part of this school. On March 5th 1858 the new building was completed but it was not a two-storied structure. The final plan showed a central dining room, a classroom or common room each side, corridors, girls sleeping quarters at the west end and boys sleeping quarters at the east end.

Mr and Mrs Mathers became the first teachers at the new National School, the building of which cost 1,695 pounds – public subscription of 466 pounds, the Board of Education 900 pounds, and there was a loan of 300 pounds from the Treasury.

In April, 1858, Dr Lawrence was appointed Patron and Secretary. In June of 1859, Mr John Paton became Correspondent and in March 1860, wrote asking for the removal of the spire from the school as leaks in the roof were caused by it.

By November 1860, it was found that boarding was a failure – there were only three boarders left and these would be withdrawn soon. It was then decided to convert the Girls' wing

into the Infants' School and the other rooms into classrooms. The average daily attendance at this time was 46 and there were 72 on the roll.

In 1862 came the change from National to Common school and 150 pounds was allotted for repairs. The school grounds then measured five chains by five chains and it was proposed to put a plantation of pine-trees around the grounds. In 1862, Mr Ednott Burbank became Head Master and his wife was the work mistress.

By 1865, four schools had been established in the Hampden Shire – Camperdown 90 pupils; Mortlake 107 pupils; Terang 81 pupils, and Darlington, XX pupils. There was also a small school in Camperdown conducted by the policeman's wife, Mrs McElwain.

Sometime within the next two years Mr Scott became Head Master and Mr Mathews and Miss Murray were assistants. By 1867, there were 200 children on the roll at Camperdown Public School. In 1870, Mr Hilliard became Head Teacher and in the following year a new classroom was added. At this time Dr Curdie was Chairman of the School Committee with Mr J.H. XXebles, Mr John McCabe, Mr A. Clark, Mr John Wiggins, Mr J.H. Tait, Mr John Walls, Mr Francis Cole and Mr John Stevenson was Correspondent.

In 1872, The Department of Education, as we know it now, was established. In 1874 a plan was drawn up for a new school and in 1886, a contract was let to McCrae and Fullarton for additions to the school.

In February 1965, this building was completely destroyed by fire and the district lost a valuable link with its early beginning. A new cream-brick building of nine classrooms was constructed on the same site by A.V. Jennings at a cost of \$110,658. Incorporated in this building was a central library, the first library room to be built to the specifications of the Library Branch of the Education Department. The school was officially opened by the Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, M.L.A. on November 12th 1965.

During its construction, the pupils were billeted in the R.S.L. and church halls – not one school day was lost over this upheaval. The attendance at the time was 331. The school committee consisted of; Messrs R. Armistead, (Chairman), Bouchier, Shepherd, Jones, Melville, Eagles, Belyea and Fleming. Mr Francis Fiscalini, the Principal, was in charge for the whole of this period.
