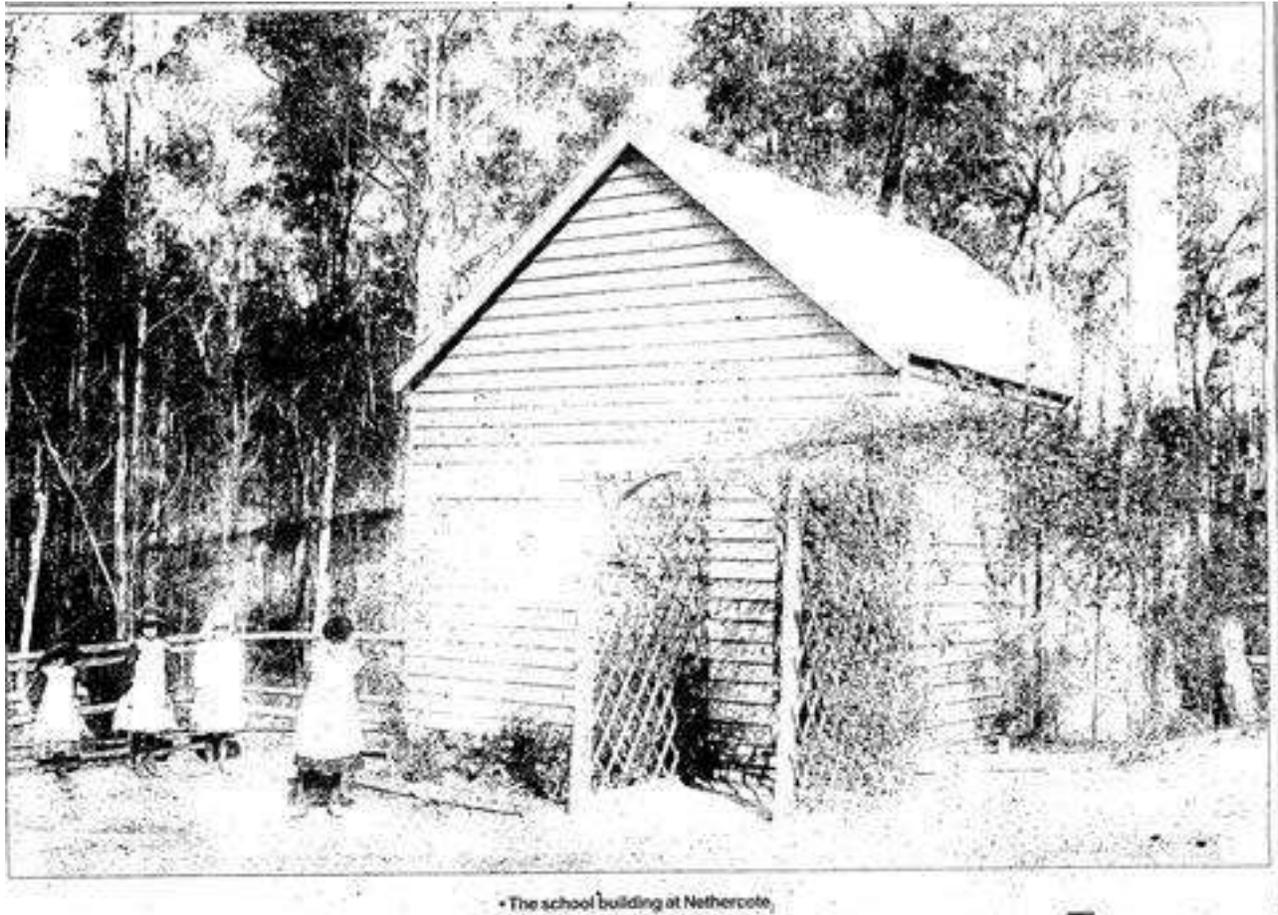


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80 years of service

By ANGELA GEORGE

IN RESPONSE to an application to establish a school in the Nethercote area, permission for such an institution was granted on September 11, 1886.

Opening as a provisional school the following year, Mr William McCready was appointed as the first teacher, arriving on January 14, 1887.

He was followed by Mary J Shen, who replaced Mr McCready on January 9, 1889.

She remained until January 8, 1891.

Nethercote Provisional School's next teacher was Margaret Storman, but in November the same year she resigned without notice.

Mr Walter Kebby replaced Miss Storman on November 25, and in March 1894 he was promoted to Class IIIA.

Albert E Watson arrived to take over the teaching position on

July 10, 1894, and it was under him that the school was upgraded to public status, which was attained on October 1, 1894.

The Pambula Voice reported: "It is notified in the Government Gazette of the 12th inst that it is proposed to establish a public school at Nethercote in lieu of the existing provisional school".

A popular event associated with the Nethercote school was the annual picnic.

The Pambula Voice in February 1889 reported that the picnic that year had been held at the sawmill and that Messrs Goldberg Brothers and Co and Thomas Brothers gave lollies and dates, and T J Ramsey also donated some prizes for running competitions.

By August 1899 the Nethercote Progress Association was in existence with Mr Swinnerton as president and Mr O Harrison, honorary secretary.

They agitated for the erection of a weathershed at the Nethercote school as one of their many projects.

It is not known exactly when the school was constructed, but by 1900 improvements to the building were *necessary, with tenders called in the June 15, 1900 issue of the Pambula Voice.*

Mr J L Dunn of Pambula was the successful tenderer, at a cost of 42 pounds.

As a result of these improvements, it was necessary to close the school down for about three weeks whilst the work was completed.

The Voice reported completion of the work in November 1900.

In September 1901, further tenders were called for fencing of the school ground as well as provision and installation of tanks to provide the students with afresh source of water.

In 1902 it was announced that the Nethercote School teacher was to have a purpose built residence, and in October that year tenders for the work were called.

Messrs J and E Martin of Cobargo were the successful contractors at a price of 292 pounds 14 shillings.

However, some considerable delay was experienced with respect to the selection of a suitable site, so delaying the commencement of construction.

The Voice reported in April 1903: "Messrs Martin Brothers are pushing ahead with their contract for the erection of a teacher's residence at Nethercote Public School".

In July, the Voice reported: "The new teacher's residence at Nethercote Public School is completed and will be ready occupation as soon as the work has been passed by the Government inspector. The building is a credit to the contractors Messrs Martin Brothers of Cobargo".

The residence. was passed by the Government inspector in August and by September Mr Watson and his family had moved into their new home.

This must have been quite a relief for the teacher, who had lived in Pambula prior to the construction of the school residence, possibly because of want of a suitable residence available at Nethercote.

It would therefore have meant a journey of about 13 kilometres (or 8 miles) to and from the school each day, which would necessarily have been made either on horseback or on foot.

In 1904, Mr. Watson established a library at the Nethercote school and by 1905 it consisted of 44 volumes and 21 magazines.

In 1906. Mr Watson, who had played an important part in the firm's establishment of Nethercote School transferred to a similar institution near Wagga Wagga. and was replaced by Mr Thomas S Sykes, who arrived in March that year

By this time there were 36 children on the school roll

In 1916, it was necessary for the school to undergo painting and repairs, with Mr Dowling receiving the contract.

Due to the fact that the work was carried out during the holidays, it was not necessary for the school to be closed down this time.

By 1936 further repairs and painting were necessary, and the Government schools repair gang Mr A Burnett carried out the work in June.

In October 1915, the Pambula Voice reported that Mr Frank Kelly was putting in a tennis court for the pupils of the Nethercote School, stating that "he is taking great trouble with it.

1923 seems to have been a troubled year for the school, with three teachers during that period leaving.

Thomas Sykes, who arrived in 1906, was the first to leave that year. He was followed by William Fraser, Who arrived in April, but departed again in June.

He was followed in August by Martin Feld who lasted just a month, before he too left.

It appears that the school was then without a teacher until the arrival of Cecil Davis, who arrived in July was 1924.

He stayed at Nethercote until January 1928, so giving the students some stability after such a rapid turnover of teachers.

Mr Davis was followed by Charles Law, who was replaced by Christopher Geraghty in January 1932.

It was Mr Geraghty who the same year organised the pupils of Nethercote school to stage a public concert in the Nethercote Hall.

This was the first of many, and provided the teacher with extra funds to make improvements to the school and library.

Until the construction of the Nethercote Hall in 1911, the school was the site of much of the general public entertainment

held in that district, including concerts and dances.

In January 1961, Alan Horsefield was appointed to Nethercote, and he was to be the school's last teacher.

As a result of declining attendances and improved transport methods, the Minister for Education decided to close the Nethercote Public School in February 1964, after serving that district for almost 80 years.