

## **Miss Janet Daisy Paddock**

She was an extremely well-liked and well-regarded teacher at the old RW State School in Greenwood Ave (Now Federation Estate). She taught between the years of 1927 until 1941, then again after the war from 1951 until final retirement in 1961. In fact she was so liked that her former pupils formed "The 2997 Club", which met in her honour every year for a meal (and, of course, their guest of honour). 2997 was the RW SS number.

In some of her letters about early life in RW, she recalls the RW Mail being produced and printed in a small wooden building in Adelaide St. [Adelaide St is officially no longer on the RW map but it went from the highway nearly to Mullum Creek, between Melbourne St and Warrandyte Road. In fact there is an unmarked 100 metres of road that is on the west side of Officeworks that ends in a roundabout at the bottom of Eastland carpark. I don't believe it is exactly in the same position as the old Adelaide Street but it pretty close. That would put the old Mail office in the vicinity of the Maroondah Council service centre in Eastland.]

She also recalls that there were nearly a dam on every corner. In fact, I recall in my 1950s/60s childhood that there were still many dams around. As I previously mentioned, with the RW-Mitcham claybelt, there wasn't much top soil and the orange clay is very fine, so when the banks of the dam get wet, it was very slippery. I often remember playing around in those dams, as most boys did in those days. A friend and I spied an old bath used to water some horses so after some trial and errors we made it waterproof and fashioned a couple of paddles out of wooden fence pailings. The first launch in the local dam was fine and we managed to manoeuvre through the bullrushes into the middle. The only thing that I forgot about was that I had a dog that went everywhere with me and, rather than bark from the bank, he swam over to us and tried to get aboard. Bath tubs are not known for their seaworthiness and he tipped us all in the drink. Of course the bath sank like a rock. We scrambled on the bank and he added insult to injury when, as all dogs do, gave the usual shake and sprayed us with water. My mind often comes back to one dam right next to the Croydon pub - that provided water to the Magg's orchard - dug in the usual fashion on about 3 metres deep scraped in the local clay. It was at this dam in the early sixties that a young boy drowned. After that we were pretty careful around dams.

Going back to Daisy's memories, she recalls that the kids often started late on Monday mornings as Monday was Market Day at RW. They used to watch the stock being herded into the yards and people getting off the steam trains. Her family home was at Gruyere and her father used to drive to RW market and stop midway at the Burnt Bridge hotel and rest the horses. [I suspect that he may have watered other things besides the horses.] They eventually moved to RW in Thanet St. Miss Paddock still remembers the old RW school at the corner of RW St and Whitehorse Road. It was very small so they built the new school in Greenwood Ave.

RW had a population of around 2,000 when Daisy became an Assistant Class Five. She used to walk through the open paddocks, surrounded by bush and orchards. She goes on to say that the bush was alive with wildlife and a natural playground for the children.

Miss Paddock was a member of the Soroptomist Club in RW (equivalent to Rotary), active in the church and local community. At our archives, we have a plaque that graced the entrance to the school, naming it the Miss Daisy Paddock library, in honour of a great woman in our city.