

1930's

Memories of Veda Heath (Ashford)

Having finished my school days at Bendigo High School, I was appointed as a student teacher to S.S. 4265 Albion in 1937.

As an 18 year old, I went to live with my grandparents in North Williamstown. I traveled by train, changing at Footscray where I would join three other teachers, Miss Catt, Miss Brink and Miss White - always in the same compartment, and we would walk up to the school together, sometimes the children would join us, too. There were no cars at the school - the head Master rode a bicycle.

Mr Polson was the Head Master - he taught Grades 5 & 6, Miss Brink taught Grade 3 & 4, Miss Catt the Infant Mistress & Miss White taught Gr. 2 & 1 & Prep. Jean Morris and I were the two student teachers, observing and assisting in various classes. This was the year of the Coronation of King George 4th, so that was the No. 1 topic for some weeks. There was no T.V. so we had lots of pictures of Robes, jewels - models of coaches and horses, etc.

As further training for Jean and myself, we were required to go to needlework, music and singing and art classes.

Two days a week we would walk to Sunshine Rail Station (the trains from St Albans were not very frequent in those days) to catch the 3.30p.m. train to Footscray - to music at Hyde St. School, and needlework at the Girls School Saturday morning we went into Melbourne to do art at the Workingman's College - now R.M.I.T.

As we had no male teachers I used to umpire the football for grades 3 & 4 - I knew little about it - we had fun - but it was very cold and windy in the paddock, there were few houses around in those times. Sewing classes were good, but when the knitting began, there were long queues needing help - dropped stitches & mistakes - I'm sure the experience improved my skills with the needles.

During the Polio epidemic the school was closed for some weeks, but the teachers had to attend each day. The Education Dept. issued booklets of lessons to help the children at home, so we teachers used to deliver the new book and take the last one back to school to correct the work. We got to know the streets of Albion quite well.

I taught a small grade 3 in 1938 - a lovely group of children.

The next year I had grade 5 till June when I left to go to Williamstown High School. Mr Roach was Head Master.

Choosing not to go to teachers college, I was sent out to several country schools to replace the men who were enlisting to go to war.

When my soldier returned in 1942, we married and I went to live in Queensland.

I have happy memories of my days at Albion.