



*BULGA PUBLIC SCHOOL*  
**Centenary Celebrations**

*Saturday, 19th October, 1968*

The front cover shows the school as it is today,  
with the teacher's residence attached. Pupils  
are seated at the front of the school.

# *Centenary Celebrations Programme*

*SATURDAY, 19th OCTOBER, 1968*

- 2.00 p.m. Presentation of Centenary Certificate; Unveiling of Centenary Plaque and Address by Mr. F. L. O'Keefe, M.L.A., at the Bulga School.  
Items by Singleton Town Band and Choral Items by Bulga pupils.  
Address by Mr. W. W. Grant, B.A., Dip.Ed. (Admin.), Inspector of Schools (Cessnock).  
Address by Deputy Shire President of Patrick Plains Shire Council, Cr. A. F. Pankhurst.  
Inspection of old school records, examples of school-work and school photographs.
- 4.00 p.m. Afternoon Tea at Bulga Hall.
- 8.00 p.m. Centenary Dance in Bulga Hall.

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**CENTENARY COMMITTEE:** V. Partridge, Mrs. D. K. Partridge, M. Brosi, Mrs. B. C. Turnbull, F. G. Bridgement.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Publication of this souvenir has been assisted very generously by the following business people and private residents of Singleton and district. To them, we wish to express our sincere appreciation.

Tulloch's Supermarket  
H. E. Lancaster Pty. Ltd.  
Singleton Pharmacy  
Jaycoe Dry Cleaners  
Norman Gray & Sons  
Russell & Chenoweth  
Attwaters  
Chapman's Newsagency  
Chapman's Pharmacy  
Harry Bourke & Sons

Mr. Dave Clark  
Mr. Roy Bates  
Mr. J. W. McGavin  
Mr. Lloyd Turnbull  
Mr. Keith Partridge  
Mr. A. Ryan  
Patrick Plains Shire Council  
Howe's Valley P. & C. Assn.  
Mr. and Mrs. G. McCredie  
Miss D. Turnbull

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The basic material for the history of the school was supplied by the Department of Education.

## SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH 1892



Back: 1. ——— 2. ——— 3. Betsy Wood. 4. Clarice Clark. 5. Emily Partridge.  
6. Roy Roser. 7. Alec Eather.

Middle: 1. ——— 2. ——— 3. Peter Wood. 4. Guy Partridge. 5. Malcolm Roser.  
6. ———. 7. Gwennie Clark. 8. ———.

Front: 1. —. Moore. 2. —. Moore. 3. —. Bates. 4. ——— 5. Hilton Partidge. 6. Frank  
Roser. 7. Florrie Moore. 8. Ethel Partridge. 9. ———. 10. Edie Partridge.

## *The History of Bulga from 1820 to 1921*

An interesting account of the history of Bulga was written by Archie Eather while a pupil of the school. Excerpts of his story are as follows:—

Bulga is an ancient aboriginal name meaning mountain or mountainous, given to this district long ago, many years before the white man ventured this way. So it was thus the peaceful little village lying under the

shelter of the Bulga mountains derived its present name.

Its original discovery dates with that of Patrick's Plains in March 1820, Bulga being the first place reached by

Howe, Singleton and Thorley on leaving the ranges. The explorers descended from a spur in Welshe's Inlet on the Milbrodale Estate near or on the property at present owned by Mr. L. Dodds.

After its original discovery its first pioneers, of whom there is authentic record, were Mr. Thomas Eather, Senr., and Mr. William McAlpin, Senr., Mr. McAlpin being then a boy of 16. The journey was made from Richmond through Colo, Putty and Howe's Valley -- being performed on foot, a bullock being used in place of a pack-horse.

In the same year 1826, Mr. Eather returned with his wife and eldest child, the late Mr. Thomas Eather, who was then a small baby. For a number of years the original settler resided at Bulga having acquired a grant of land from the Crown.

Mr. McAlpin also returned in 1842 with his wife and eldest child, Mr William McAlpin, to take up residence at Bulga where he died in 1902.

Settlement quickly followed as the route taken by the pioneers was used as the main thoroughfare for stock travelling from the north to Sydney.

The first settlement was on the fertile land adjoining the Cockfighter Creek. This creek derived its name through a horse called Cockfighter being bogged in it.

The principal land-holders were the Rev. Mr. Hill, who founded the Milbrodale Estate, Mr. Williams, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Eaton, Mr. McAlpin, Mr. Joseph Onus and his two sons William and Joseph.

The Cockfighter Creek presented a very different appearance to the early set-

tlers from its present aspect, being then deep and narrow with alternate stretches of deep water and sand. Then the banks were fringed with big, shady oak trees. This was the main water supply of Bulga.

In the vicinity wandering tribes of blacks were to be seen. On the sites of their old camps the stone implements of this strange race are found today.

From an ethnological standpoint Bulga is an intensely interesting locality for many beautifully made stone implements found today throw considerable light on savage life. Here also is to be seen the remains of an ancient Bora ground with its sacred circle still defined by small mounds of earth and a ring of carved trees, still bearing the curious emblematical devices which marked this strange and mysterious ceremony of initiation to tribal rites. This Bora was held in 1852. On reliable authority of residents of the locality it was attended by between 500 and 600 blacks from various tribes from as far as Mudgee and Goulburn.

It is also interesting to note that during the months the Bora was being held no record is in existence of a single crime or outrage perpetrated on any of the white settlers, though they must have been completely at their mercy had the blacks proved hostile. The white settlers were rigidly excluded from the Bora.

It is thought to have been the last muster of the various tribes who attended be-

fore the advance of the white man.

The early life of the settlement was indeed strenuous.

All the necessities of life required from outside had to be conveyed about 100 miles. The greater part of this distance was over rough, broken, mountain ranges, the only means of transport being a pack-horse or a bullock with only a track to mark the way.

The stock brought to Bulga did remarkably well and were driven back to Richmond and Windsor as occasion demanded.

The education of the children was a problem which worried the parents. However, this difficulty was overcome somewhat by the employment of Mr. John Wagstaff, an old English gentleman, as teacher in the family of Mr. John Eaton. His school room was a hut standing on the bank of the lagoon previously mentioned as By-yong.

Besides the members of Mr. Eaton's family some of the neighbour's children were taught also. This was about the year 1850. As the children of the settlement increased the school was shifted to an old building where some acacia trees are still growing on the eastern bank of the Cockfighter about 100 yards below where the Bulga Bridge now stands.

This was the first village school of Bulga. A movement was set on foot among the most progressive settlers to build a church and school

room. An acre of land was donated by Mr. John Eaton for church, school land, and cemetery. Previous to this the dead were buried where fancy dictated, a number near the Horseshoe.

Mr. William McAlpin Senr., known in his honour-

ed old age as the grandfather of Bulga, and an old man in his employ named Woodbury cut and split the timber for the building which was of slab walls and shingle roof. The timber was drawn to the site by Mr. William Clark, Senr.

The erection of the building was paid for by public subscription, all other labour in connection with it being voluntary. It was erected near the site of St. Mark's Church of England about the year 1856 and served the combined purpose of church and school.

### SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH 1905



Back: 1. Peter Woods. 2. ———. 3. Bill McAlpin. 4. ———. 5. ———. 6. Horace Jackson. 7. ———. 8. Clarence Bailey. 9. Ernie McKay. 10. Jack Eather. 11. ———. 12. Mr. Hilton Watts (teacher).

Middle: 1. Linda Hayes. 2. Dell Clark. 3. Annie Clark. 4. Laura Eather. 5. Alma Watts. 6. Bessie Eather. 7. Mary Spencer. 8. ———. 9. Ethel McKay. 10. Edna Spencer. 11. Ettie Dickenson. 12. Mr. Amos Hayes.

Front: 1. Verlie Watts (?). 2. Verlie Bailey (?). 3. ———. 4. Bill McKay. 5. Arthur Bates. 6. Vic Partridge. 7. ———. 8. Harlie Watts. 9. Herb Dickenson (kneeling). 10. ———. 11. Jim Clark. 12. Harry Bates.

# Reminiscences of the oldest ex-pupil

The oldest known living ex-pupil of the Bulga School is Miss Ethel Sarah Woods, aged 94 years. Miss Woods is a remarkable woman with a very fine memory, yet shows a great interest in the affairs of these modern times.

Miss Woods was born at Retreat Farm, Bulga, on the 20th July, 1874.

Her grandfather had travelled to the Bulga district from the Hawkesbury area on foot while one of his sisters, Sally, rode a bullock. His other sister Kitty Clark, became the mother of Peter Clark who was held up and shot dead by the bush-ranger, Harry Wilson, at Waldron Range near Murrurundi, in 1863. Incidentally, at the time of his death, Peter Clark was engaged to the first teacher at Bulga — Miss Susanna Clark (no relation to Peter).

One of Miss Woods' earliest memories is of the laying of the foundation stone for the present school building which was laid in 1879 — as a four-year-old she saw the ladies dressing up and powdering their faces for the dance which was to follow the ceremony! She reminds us, too, that two gold sovereigns and a copy of the Maitland Mercury were placed beneath the foundation stone.

## 62 ON THE ROLL

Miss Woods recalls that there were 62 pupils on the roll when she was in attendance and that the "littlies" had to move out onto the porch under the supervision of an older pupil. Her

teacher, Mr. Moore, was not very popular apparently with the boys who were often on the receiving end of his cane.

Miss Woods' most vivid memory is of the dispute between Alec Eather and George Richards as to who would ring the bell — a disagreement which resulted in George losing some front teeth.

Miss Woods' mother often visited Richmond — by boat from Morpeth. Candles were made in the home from bullock fat. Honey was ex-

tracted from the comb by straining through a sugar bag, and plenty of fish could be netted in the creek or "Horseshoe."

## RAILWAY OVERPASS

According to Miss Woods her grandfather was the first person in Bulga to own a horse-drawn spring-cart. She remembers having to wait three hours in a sulky for the John Street railway gates to open, while her mother explained that they planned to put in an overhead bridge and she hoped it would be soon.

This grand old lady remembers the aborigines of the "Gerale" tribe which flocked to her grandfather's property and how she often played with the native girls.

Miss Woods believes that schools have changed for the better since her time and is pleased to see youngsters doing so much reading — a pastime made very difficult in the old days because of the lack of books.

Reading and the church are two of her main interests. We look forward to Miss Woods' visit to the school on October 19, when she will be invited to cut the Centenary Cake.



## *History of Bulga Public School . . .*

When the Public Schools Act of 1886 abolished the Dual System of national and denominational schools, it allowed for the establishment of public schools under the control of the Council of Education. This led to an influx of applications for schools from many of the small towns in N.S.W., and often one man residing in the local district acted as a "promoter" for a new school.

In the Bulga District, Reverend Francis W. Bode seems to have acted in this capacity. On 9th January 1868 he reported to the Council:

"There would be a regular attendance of from 20 to 25 children at Bulga, were a school established there. The children tho' numerous are very scattered."

The Reverend Mr. Bode was appointed to the Local School Committee during a meeting held by the prospective parents. Of the two other members appointed at this time, Mr. Thomas Eather and Mr. William Partridge, Mr. Eather was also destined to have a great influence on the school.

The meeting resulted in an application for a Public School, signed on 5th February 1868 by the Committee and by Mr. McAlpin Junior. The application form reveals that the nearest public school was nine miles distant and that 26 children resided within a radius of two miles from the proposed site, which they described as being:

"On the bank of the Wollombi Brook 5 or 6 miles from Warkworth and

about 18 or 20 miles South West of Singleton."

The proposed new school was not the first in the District. A small private school had been conducted on Church of England premises by Miss Susanna Clark, but the high rate of fees charged seems to have caused difficulties for parents. The Inspector's report on the application throws light on this existing situation, and is worthy of some space in this account:

"I visited this locality on the 12th instant and found an attendance of only 8 pupils, the usual number according to the teachers statement being about 12. The reason of the disproportion between the number of children receiving and that requiring instruction is, in general, the inability of parents to pay the rates (one shilling each per week) which under present circumstances the Teacher is obliged to charge."

Continuing his report, the Inspector pointed out that the Committee, when applying for a Public School, had overlooked one important requisite. Article 10 of Section 2 of the regulations set down by the Public Schools

Act stated that a proper school-house had to be provided by the local residents. The Inspector expressed this in the following manner:

"The application appears to have been made in ignorance of the provisions of the Public Schools Act and of the Regulations of the Council, for there is no building available over which the applicants **have control**: nor have they taken any steps towards the erection of one. As matters stand at present, the little Church used by the Episcopalians and vested in the Bishop of Newcastle is permitted to be used as a private school by the young woman named in the Revd. W. Bode's letter — Miss Clark."

As a solution to the problem he suggested that a Provisional School be applied for, giving further support to his opinion by stating:

"The people are mostly poor, and though promising regular attendances to get a School started they would not long continue to keep their promises; and the Wollombi Brook which has to be crossed by a considerable number of children is frequently impassable."

He sent an application form for a Provisional School to Mr. Eather, and the Local Committee used it, signing it on 23rd June 1868. The proposed Provisional School was to be conducted on the same Church of England premises, and Miss Clark was recommended as teacher. By this time 27 children were expected to attend. The application was granted and the books were ordered by 24th October 1868.

The Inspector had reported on Miss Clark in the following manner:

"The teacher is not at present qualified, but she is very industrious and desirous of improving herself."

He seems to have been correct in his estimation of her. In July 1869 she applied for books which she needed for study to enable her to discharge her school duties more effectively. She in fact was prepared to, and did, pay one pound towards the cost.

Over the next few years the school seems to have progressed satisfactorily. The only correspondence between the school and the Council dealt with requisitions for school materials and the non-receipt of salary.

However by January 1874 Miss Clark was required to give a reason for the low average attendance at the school. The attendance was apparently below the minimum required for a Provisional School and this placed the school in danger of being closed. She explained:

"The flood has hindered

the children one week this month which has reduced the average to below the required minimum otherwise it would have been over the maximum. Children have attended very well when possible."

But in March she explained that three families had left the district, taking with them eleven of the children. She further stated that of the 49 remaining, 15 were too young, and that 28 of the possible 34 were now at school. She wrote:

"The remaining 6 have been chiefly kept away by **sickness** or **inability** on part of mothers to spare them".

Miss Clark's difficulties, particularly with the attendance figures, were increased by the distance she had to travel to obtain her salary. When writing to the Council about this matter she requested punctuality in the posting. Her letter shows us why, the underlining apparently being provided for emphasis:

"I live between five and six miles from Warkworth. It is a tiresome road on account of seven sliprails to be opened which in going and returning make just fourteen times to get down and open and shut them. Also, the **time** after half past 3 o'clock to walk half a mile home, get my horse etc., and return before dark is trying to one who has **no one to send**."

In October 1874 a change was made to the Local Committee. The appointment of Reverend E. Huband-Smith, B.A., was recom-

mended. There appears to have been the suggestion of a change in policy, for although Mr. Huband-Smith was not the first clergyman to serve on the Bulga Committee, the Inspector wrote:

"Though I am of opinion that the appointment of clergymen as members of Provisional School Committee is impolite, inexpedient and unnecessary yet considering that the Rev. E. Huband-Smith has been already recognised by the Council as a member of the Doyles Creek Provisional School Committee there appears to me no other alternative than to grant the requisition of Messrs. Eather and McAlpin."

A change of teacher was imminent at Bulga. Mr. Richard Fawcett had apparently heard that Miss Clark was about to resign, and applied for the position. Miss Clark did in fact resign on 1st February 1875, to take effect from 22nd March. She wrote:

"I am sorry to say my reason for so doing is the miserable State of the School House, in very **cold** weather. I dare not pass another winter in it, and I most earnestly beg of you to insist on some means being employed to warm the room. I **know** that those poor children suffer from cold and I offered to defray the expense of building a chimney myself, but was not permitted to do so, so I wrote a full Statement of the matter to Mr. Inspector Jones this time last

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH ABOUT 1907



Back: 1. Mr. H. Watts. 2. Bill Clark. 3. Perc. Bates. 4. Harley Watts (?). 5. Vic. Partridge. 6. John Eather. 7. Lyle Morris. 8. Arthur Bates. 9. Jim Clark.  
 Middle: 1. E. Dickenson. 2. Linda Hayes. 3. Mary Spencer (?). 4. Eileen McAlpin. 5. Edna Spencer. 6. Dell Clark. 7. Nellie McAlpin.  
 Front: 1. Harry Bates. 2. Edie Mellon. 3. Verlie Watts. 4. Mollie Bates. 5. Kathleen Bates. 6. Ethel McKay. 7. Florrie Mellon.  
 Seated: 1. Perc Archinal. 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_.

year, or earlier but with no result."

However it appears that Miss Clark had been unjust. When recommending Mr. Fawcett as teacher Mr. Inspector Jones wrote:

"I would advise that Mr.

Fawcett be recognized as the teacher of this school and that the Council insist on the Local Committee providing the School-room with a fireplace the necessity of which has been twice represented to them by me."

The first recommendation was agreed to, but it is not known whether a fireplace was provided. Mr. Fawcett however also came into conflict with Mr. Jones. Errors were discovered in his School Records, but he explained that during recent

floods he spent so much time helping the children cross the river, that he could not do his books daily and had to do them hurriedly when the Inspector visited. Mr. Jones was not impressed:

"I am of opinion that Mr Fawcett's defence is plausible and unsatisfactory and that his falsification of the Class Roll entries of the attendance rose more from design than negligence. Considering however the character of his pleading for forgiveness and of his promises of future good conduct, I would advise the Council to censure him for his misconduct and to strictly caution him against the repetition of it."

On a more pleasant note, the attendance at the school was increasing sufficiently to allow moves for the establishment of a Public School at Bulga.

#### **PUBLIC SCHOOL STATUS**

On 25th September 1876 an application for a Public School at Bulga was signed by the Local Committee, comprising W. G. McAlpin, Thomas Eather and William Partridge. The application form reveals that the nearest school was six miles distant and that 42 children lived within a radius of two miles.

When reporting on the application the Inspector pointed out that the Provisional School did not provide sufficient accommodation for the available attendance, which he estimated at a gross of 50 pupils, and a probable average attendance of 35 to 40. How-

ever he added that this figure could only be expected if a boat was provided to ferry some of the children across the river.

When discussing the three possible sites available, the Inspector approved an acre which formed part of Bradford's Flat, and which adjoined the existing site. Half an acre of this land was generally declared to be beyond flood reach and the Inspector felt that it was the most central site possible.

Thus the Inspector recommended that the application be granted and that a boat be provided and in February 1877 Bulga Provisional School became Bulga Public School.

As the population of the school district was approximately 150 and as in the Inspector's view the District was likely to be permanently inhabited, he recommended the erection of a school-room. When describing the local population he wrote:

"Most of the people are free-hold farmers and a few of them free selectors."

The plans for the proposed buildings encompassed a weatherboard school-room twenty-three feet by seventeen feet providing accommodation for 56 pupils, and a teacher's residence with three rooms and a kitchen. The estimated cost was £500. But the final decision to build depended on the provision of a boat, which would ensure sufficient attendance. The Council of Education at this stage disapproved of paying for boats, and the local

residents refused to provide one. When reporting the stalemate in December 1877 the Inspector wrote:

". . . the people will not purchase a boat and therefore until the proposed bridge be constructed over the Wollombi River, an increase in the attendance is improbable."

The proposed bridge proved to be the delaying point, and it was decided that the Provisional School room would be large enough for the present, and the building plans were postponed.

But by August 1878, the situation had changed. The Inspector reported that the bridge would be completed in a few months. This removed the need for a boat and he recommended that the building plans be carried out. It was decided to build with brick rather than timber to avoid damage by white ants and the estimated cost accordingly rose to £800. Advertisements in the Singleton Argus and the Maitland Mercury called for tenders and Mr. Joseph Clark's tender of £798 was accepted on 6th January 1879.

Mr. Clark was hampered in his efforts to erect the buildings by severe flooding. The question of the suitability of the site was again raised, but as the flooding had only reached the out-houses, and as the floods were exceptional (three in several weeks) the doubts were allayed. Mr. Clark completed the buildings by January 1880.

Over these formative years of the Public School there was a rapid turnover of

## SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH 1914



Top row: 1. Ella Anderson. 2. Bill Clark. 3. Ben Barratt. 4. Jim Clark. 5. Dave Clark. 6. Ted Cruickshanks. 7. Hector Clark. 8. Perc. Bates. 9. Evelyn Barratt.

Second row: 1. Torry Cruickshanks. 2. Clarice Anderson. 3. Gladys Bates. 4. Eileen Bates. 5. Nellie Bates. 6. Rita Anderson. 3. Kittie Dickenson.

Third row: 1. Jack Eveleigh. 2. Alan Partridge. 3. Hursla Carroll. 4. ———. 5. Pearl Bates. 6. Dorothy McAlpin. 7. Edna Barratt. 8. Maude Bates.

Fourth row: 1. Athol Barratt. 2. Wilfred Dodds. 3. Lenny Dodds. 4. Dorothy Barratt. 5. Nita Hayes. 6. Les Bates.

staff. Mr. James Fawcett who had applied for admission to the Public Training School on 17th November 1876 had been replaced by Miss Elizabeth Maxwell. Unfortunately Miss Maxwell resigned on 3rd January, 1878 and she was replaced by Mr. Richard Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell did not have

a sufficiently high classification for the new Public School. Moves were made to have him transferred to a less important school, but the parents objected to this. In a petition (signed by 22 parents on 30th September 1879) they wrote:

"... he has been here for one year and eight months

and has gained the approbation of the inspector Mr. Bradley, Besides giving (sic) general Satisfaction to the inhabitants."

As a result the Council decided that he could remain, if he prepared himself for the usual examinations. However the moves

proved to be unnecessary. Mr. Mitchell resigned on 1st September 1880 because of failing health and "other matters". He was replaced by Mr. John Deane, who was instructed to act as teacher pending another appointment.

It was Mr. Deane's habit to leave the children at lunchtime, and walk one hundred yards to the residence to have his lunch. In January 1881 Mr. Hayes, a parent of some of the children, objected to this in a letter to the now Department of Public Instruction. Mr. Deane pointed out that he only walked a short distance, and was never out of sight of the children but he was instructed not to do this in the future. When Mr. Hayes again complained in April, Mr. Deane was severely reprimanded for not obeying instructions.

In 1882 the parents' interest in the well - being of the school was again evident. In October 1882 they petitioned the Department (with twelve signatures) requesting a weathershed for the School. They stated:

"The school, being built upon one of the most exposed positions in the neighbourhood the children, during playhours, are not provided with any kind of shelter, consequently, during the summer months, cases of fainting sickness from the effects of the sun are almost a daily occurrence."

The work was approved and a tender for the erection of a weathershed was accepted on 2nd April 1883.

Further work was carried out on the school in the

following year. An additional room was built on to the residence by Mr. William Partridge at a cost of £58/10/-.

In September of the same year Mr. Deane resigned. He was replaced by Mr. Geoffrey Moore.

In 1887 two acres had been reserved next to the school for a paddock. Mr. Albert Gould wrote to the Council requesting that this ground be fenced, but as only two of the children came to school by horse, it was decided that this was not necessary.

In the same year Mr. Moore decided to improve the residence by building a new kitchen. This work cost him £20, while £12 was granted by the Department. Perhaps as a result of this his wife decided to earn extra money by conducting the local post office in a small room on the school grounds.

By 1889 Mr. Moore needed a buggy horse and accordingly applied to close the school on 18th August, so that he could attend a Show where they were sold. The Department of Public Instruction was not impressed, and granted the closing of the school only because the children were likely to attend.

In August 1890 the first Arbor Day Celebrations were held at the Bulga School. This day was instituted so that the Schools would be made more attractive through the planting of trees. Sixteen shade trees were applied for, and £3 was raised from local subscriptions. The school celebrated the day by holding

a picnic.

Mr. Moore applied for promotion from the Public School at Bulga in June 1892. The Inspector's statement on the application requires no comment:

"Mr. Moore is a hard-working and painstaking teacher; he is a good all-round man; he takes considerable interest in the out-door amusements of his pupils and is the leader in most social matters. I have every confidence in recommending his application for favourable consideration."

However, the cryptic comment of "Noted" at the end of the application left Mr. Moore waiting. He renewed his application in November, and several times thereafter, but it was not until 1898 that he was to be finally transferred.

In January 1894 measles broke out in Mr. Moore's family, and Mr. Rootes, an ex-pupil of the school, took temporary charge. The pupils themselves had also been affected, and an inspector reported:

". . . the attendance for a considerable period before and after the Christmas vacation was very irregular owing to sickness (measles)."

But in July 1894 a new room measuring 14 feet by 12 feet was built on to the residence, and the residence and schoolroom were repaired. This work was necessitated by Mr. Moore having a family of six as well as a servant. The work was carried out by Mr. S. Partridge at a cost of £27.

By 1895 local residents

## SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH 1930



Back: 1. Clive Rose. 2. Ewart Sylvester. 3. Keith Clark. 4. Gordon Merrick. 5. Ian Eather.  
Middle: 1. Betty Sylvester. 2. Bessie Squire. 3. Joan Bates. 4. Betty Upward. 5. Barbara  
Middleton. 6. Ivy Mason. 7. Beulah Squire.

Teacher: Mr. Middleton.

Front: 1. Alick Merrick. 2. Phyllis Mason. 3. Marie Merrick. 4. M. Tacon. 5. Gordon  
Middleton. 6. Willa Sylvester. 7. Roma Sylvester. 8. Jim Eather.

began moves to have an Evening School established at Bulga. A petition to this effect (with 24 signatures) was made in July. Seventeen people were expected to attend and residents estimated an average attendance of twelve. It was proposed that the Evening School be held in the School house, with Mr. Moore acting as teacher. Mr. John Hayes wrote in support of the application:

"The residents of this locality are desirous of hav-

ing an evening school established in connection with the Public School. There are nearly twenty young men in the neighbourhood who are anxious to avail themselves of such an opportunity to improve their education. Our present school teacher Mr. Moore will gladly undertake the duties, should he receive the necessary authority."

The District Inspector, when commenting on the application:

"Bulga is mainly a grazing district . . . It is a very isolated, dull place. An Evening Public School is much needed at Bulga."

The application was granted on the condition that Mr. Moore's salary was to cease if the average attendance fell below ten. By March 1896 Mr. Moore was enquiring why he had not received his salary for the Evening School, but the average attendance had fallen below ten, and it is assumed that it closed soon

after.

The attendance at the Public School had however improved. On 1st October 1895 the school was promoted to a 7th Class School because the average attendance was in excess of 40 pupils.

But the improvement was to be short-lived. In the first quarter of 1896 the average attendance dropped to 31.4 and by the first quarter of 1897 it had dropped to 25.7. From 1st May the School was reduced to a 9th Class School, despite the teacher's explanation:

"Some of the pupils live so far away that they have to ride. The attendance of these has been prevented by the low condition of their horses, consequent upon the protracted drought, which has been prevailing in this district. The attendance of others has been seriously interfered with by the same cause, their services being needed at home to assist in watering the stock which have had to be taken to the main creek for water for months past."

By August 1897, the drought had broken, but soon the people of Bulga were experiencing severe floods. The school grounds at Bulga were affected, the toilets being surrounded by water. The playground itself was in a damp and muddy condition. Not surprisingly, the low attendance continued.

By the end of the year Mr. Moore was finally transferred and he was replaced in January 1898 by

Mr. Ebenezer Read. Soon after he arrived Mr. Read made one interesting change to the school timetable by taking half an hour off the lunch recess. When applying for this change in procedure he wrote:

"A great number of the children live two miles and upwards from the School, and during the winter evenings it is very dark when they get home.

"The proposed alterations will not inconvenience any of the children, as all of them bring their lunch. I may also point out that it would be impractical to begin at 9 as a number of the children would be late."

Mr. Read also had to deal with a complaint by Mr. N. Woods (a local resident) concerning the state of the school's water supply. He sent a sample of the water to the Department Analyst, and duly requested that he be re-imbursed one shilling for the cost of a "Winchester Quart Bottle" used for this purpose. As a result of the complaint, two new tanks, one 600 gallon and one 800 gallon, were provided for the school.

In the following year "repairs and improvements" were carried out on the school by Mr. William B. Lovegrove at a cost of £153.

Mr. Read followed in the footsteps of his predecessor by writing numerous applications for removal. The first, written in November 1899, states:

"As this is a farming District, where all the land is taken up, there is no chance of the school ris-

ing, and it will, eventually, have to be made a half time or else closed.

". . . Prior to my taking charge Inspector Baillie said it was the worst school in his district."

Mr. Read's pessimistic view led to further applications for removal in June, August and December 1900. His long and detailed letters testify to his unwillingness to stay.

In January 1901 another application brought some action. The Chief Inspector sent a telegram to the Inspector inquiring about Mr. Read:

"Do you consider him a man of robust physique and good moral character capable of commanding respect."

Whether or not much significance can be placed on it the Inspector's reply is interesting:

"From my personal knowledge of Mr. Read, I consider him a man of sound constitution and healthy, of good moral character and capable of commanding respect if he would keep his Salvation Army notions more out of sight. In this direction, he might be considered by some people eccentric, to use the mildest word, perhaps offensive by others but I think he means well . . . He is a good teacher, and energetic to a degree."

In fact in 1903 Mr. Read was promoted from Class 2B to Class 2A and by November of that year he had been transferred.

In November of 1901 small repairs to the school had

## SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH 1957



Back: 1. Mr. Stan Gardner. 2. Jim Turnbull 3. Murray Pike. 4. David Partridge.  
5. David Atkinson. 6. Trevor Everett. 7. Gary Mavin.  
Middle: 1. Robert Atkinson. 2. Bernard Upward. 3. Bruce Turnbull (deceased). 4. Peter Berry. 5. Alan Berry. 6. Derek Partridge. 7. Hugh Upward.  
Front: 1. Rhonda Partridge. 2. Ron Turnbull. 3. Geoff Pike (deceased). 4. Julie Partridge.

been necessitated by the work of white ants. The teacher had written:

"Snakes, which are very prevalent about the school, can gain access to the house by coming up through the ant-eaten boards."

Some work was also required after a burglar had entered the schoolhouse, breaking one of the window fasteners.

Mr. Read's replacement was Mr. H. H. Watts, who came from Trybong. Mr. Watts applied for removal in 1907. He was offered Gulf Creek School but refused as the residence was unsuitable for his family of five. However by February 1908 he was replaced by Mr. George Campbell.

Soon after the new teacher's arrival, the Bulga Progress Association urged

the building of a new back verandah to the residence, a combined wash-house and laundry, and general repairs to the school and residence, including a new iron roof. This work was done by Mr. J. Head at a cost of £179/10/-.

The teacher, Mr. Campbell, made some effort to help his pupils travel to school. In August 1912 he made an application on be-

half of the parents for a subsidy to enable five children to be driven to school. The application was granted and the parents were to receive 6d per week until 31st December. Unfortunately the person who undertook to convey the children withdrew at the last moment, and no other driver was available.

Severe flooding in July 1913 again affected the Bulga School grounds. This time three floods in seven weeks resulted in damage to the toilets and the repairs that were later necessary cost £15.

A storm in the district caused some damage in September 1917 and the teacher Mr. Barratt reported:

"The front (dining room) window, frame and all, was blown right out falling inwards, breaking three panes. A heavy gale commenced to blow about daylight and continued all day . . . One of the children had been looking out of the window not two minutes before it fell."

Although the damage was repaired, Mr. Barratt's troubles continued, with mumps occurring in his family. However the school continued in operation.

Mr. Barratt instigated the formation of a Parents and Citizens' Association in 1919. When reporting the first meeting he wrote:

"The meeting was held this evening and considering the state of the weather was very successful, and I believe a real live association will be the result."

In 1921 Mr. Barratt went on long service leave and his replacement was Mr. Andrew Clark. Mr. Clark was faced with a somewhat common occurrence at the Bulga School, when the playground was again flooded. However, Mr. James Bowen placed a paddock at the disposal of the pupils for an additional playing space.

When Mr. M. S. Middleton became teacher at the school, he made a great effort to make a garden in the grounds. In the Christmas vacation 1925-26 the whole of the garden was destroyed by flood, and after another start was made, the same thing happened at Easter. It is therefore remarkable to note that in that year the school won the District Schools Garden Competition. The shield was retained the following year with a mark of 89%. The judge, Mr. Jack Britliffe, commented:

"A pleasure to judge a garden of this type. The ideal position and lay-out speaks volumes for the efforts of teacher and children."

In 1929 when Mr. Middleton applied for a new fence on the "Reserve" side of the paddock to prevent stock breaking through, the Inspector commented.

"This work is most important. The prize garden of the district is in danger of destruction."

In April 1938 repairs were carried out on the school at a cost of £142. But in August, Mr. L. Knight, as Honorary Secretary of the P. & C., wrote:

"At the last monthly

meeting of the above, members expressed their appreciation for the repairs which have been done at the Bulga School and I have been asked to congratulate you for the way in which this work has been carried out. Now that all these repairs have been completed it is really a beauty spot marred by the old split fence facing the road."

As a result, the Department of Education provided a Cyclone hand gate and netting, and the P. & C. Association agreed to carry out the work. Continuing their efforts, the association purchased a clock for the school in March 1939. The clock was inscribed to the late President, Mr. Amos Hayes.

A new window was added to the western wall of the schoolroom following criticism by the teacher of the poor light available in the room.

As a result of an accident to a pupil on his way home from school in 1938, it was considered desirable for pupils to be given lessons in first aid. These were given by Constable Giddings of the Bulga Police Station and several pupils gained certificates for proficiency gained in administering first aid.

By this time it was becoming increasingly more evident that the original, lower playground would not remain usable for very much longer, as water now covered more of it for longer periods. A report from the teacher in 1940 stated, ". . . less than half

an acre of the 4-acre playground is suitable for play and P.T." The matter was brought to a head by the floods of 1949, 1955 and 1956, when the school had to be closed because the toilets were inundated and because the Shire Council threatened to institute legal proceedings if the toilets were not re-sited. A suitable site for the new toilets was obtained by exchanging two acres of the water-covered area for two acres of the late Mr. C. W. Bird's property on the eastern side of the school. New toilets were erected on the new playground in 1957.

Electric power was connected to the school and residence in 1958.

**Recent highlights of school activities include:—**

1957: Delivery of free milk for pupils begun.

1961: New radiogram donated by P. & C. Assn.

1962: Construction of post and wire fence around "new" playground to replace last of the post and slab fences.

1963: P. & C. Assn. donated an electric clock and spirit duplicator to the school.

1964: Pupils attended swimming classes for the first time. These were arranged by the Singleton Small Schools' Association, and lessons were given in the Singleton Baths; Memoirs of schooldays at Bulga in 1909, written by E. L. Bates, were printed in the Singleton Argus.

1965: Installation of refrigerator in school by Singleton Lions' Club;

Erection of new flagpole.

1966: Repairs to, and complete painting of school and residence; Concrete assembly area installed;

P. & C. Assn. provides funds for the erection of fixed P.E. equipment in playground;

Important to the school was the enrolment of 11 pupils from Howe's Valley: the number on the roll being lifted from a low 14 to 25.

1967: A new Australian flag was presented to the school by the local M.H.R. — the ceremony was later televised:

A garage was erected for

teacher's use.

1968:

Jan.: Weather shed demolished by windstorm.

June: Special school bus service extended to Howe's Valley.

July: P. & C. installed telephone in school residence.

Sept.: School wins two of three trophies awarded to small schools at Singleton (marching and tunnel ball cups).

Oct.: School Centenary celebrated.

Apparently, in its 100 plus years of providing education for the children of the district, Bulga School has never been closed for more than a few days at a time.

**LIST OF HEAD TEACHERS**

Name	Date Appointed
Miss Suzanne Clark	October, 1868
Mr. Richard Fawcett	March, 1875
Miss Elizabeth Maxwell	January, 1877
Mr. Richard Mitchell	January, 1878
Mr. John Deane	September, 1880
Mr. George Moore	10.10.1884
Mr. Ebenezer Read	10.1.1898
Mr. Hilton Watts	10.11.1903
Mr. Geo. Campbell	31.1.1908
Mr. J. F. Barratt	7.8.1913
Mr. John Richardson	14.4.1921
Mr. Clyde Graham	17.9.1921
Mr. Malcolm Middleton	20.4.1922
Mr. Clement McAlister	8.7.1932
Mr. Francis Paul	1.10.1936
Mr. Jack Allen	18.12.1940
Mr. Kenneth Moylan	26.9.1945
Mr. Stanley Gardner	1.7.1955
Mr. Frederick Bridgement	31.1.1961

## BULGA SCHOOL PUPILS 1968



Back: 1. Graham Bowd. 2. Wayne Harris. 3. Garry Halton. 4. David Bowd. 5. Robert Della-ca. 6. Colin Partridge. 7. Patrick Mason. 8. Terrence McGrath. 9. Scott Harris. 10. Mark Halton.  
Centre: 1. Margaret McGrath. 2. Gay Pike. 3. Fay Miller. 4. Loretta Turnbull. 5. Mr. F. Bridgement. 6. Aileen Halton. 7. Colleen Bowd. 8. Maria McGrath. 9. Kim Bridgement.  
Front: 1. Kerry Miller. 2. Dennis Pike. 3. Rodney Bowd. 4. Debra Halton. 5. Pamela Miller. 6. Tanya Harris. 7. Katrina Bridgement. 8. Chris. Miller. 9. David Brosi.